The ספר הזהר ZOHAR

PRITZKER EDITION

IX

Numbers–Deuteronomy

Translation and Commentary by

DANIEL C. MATT

ספר הזהר

The

ZOHAR

ספר הזהר

Pritzker Edition

VOLUME NINE

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Daniel C. Matt

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA
2016

The translation and publication of the Zohar *is made possible through the thoughtful and generous support of the Pritzker Family Philanthropic Fund*.

Stanford University Press
Stanford, California

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For further information, including the Aramaic text of the *Zohar*, please visit www.sup.org/zohar

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Zohar. English.

The Zohar/translation and commentary by Daniel C. Matt.–
Pritzker ed.
v. cm.
Text includes some words in Hebrew and Aramaic.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-8047-9440-4 (cloth)--
ISBN 978-1-5036-0348-6 (electronic) (vol. 9)

1. Bible. O.T. Pentateuch–Commentaries–Early works to 1800. 2. Cabala–Early works to 1800. 3. Zohar. I. Matt, Daniel Chanan.
II. Title.
BM525.A52 M37 2003

296.1’62-dc22

2003014884

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free, archival-quality paper.

Designed by Rob Ehle
Typeset by El Ot Pre Press & Computing Ltd., Tel Aviv,
in 10.5/14 Minion.

Academic Committee

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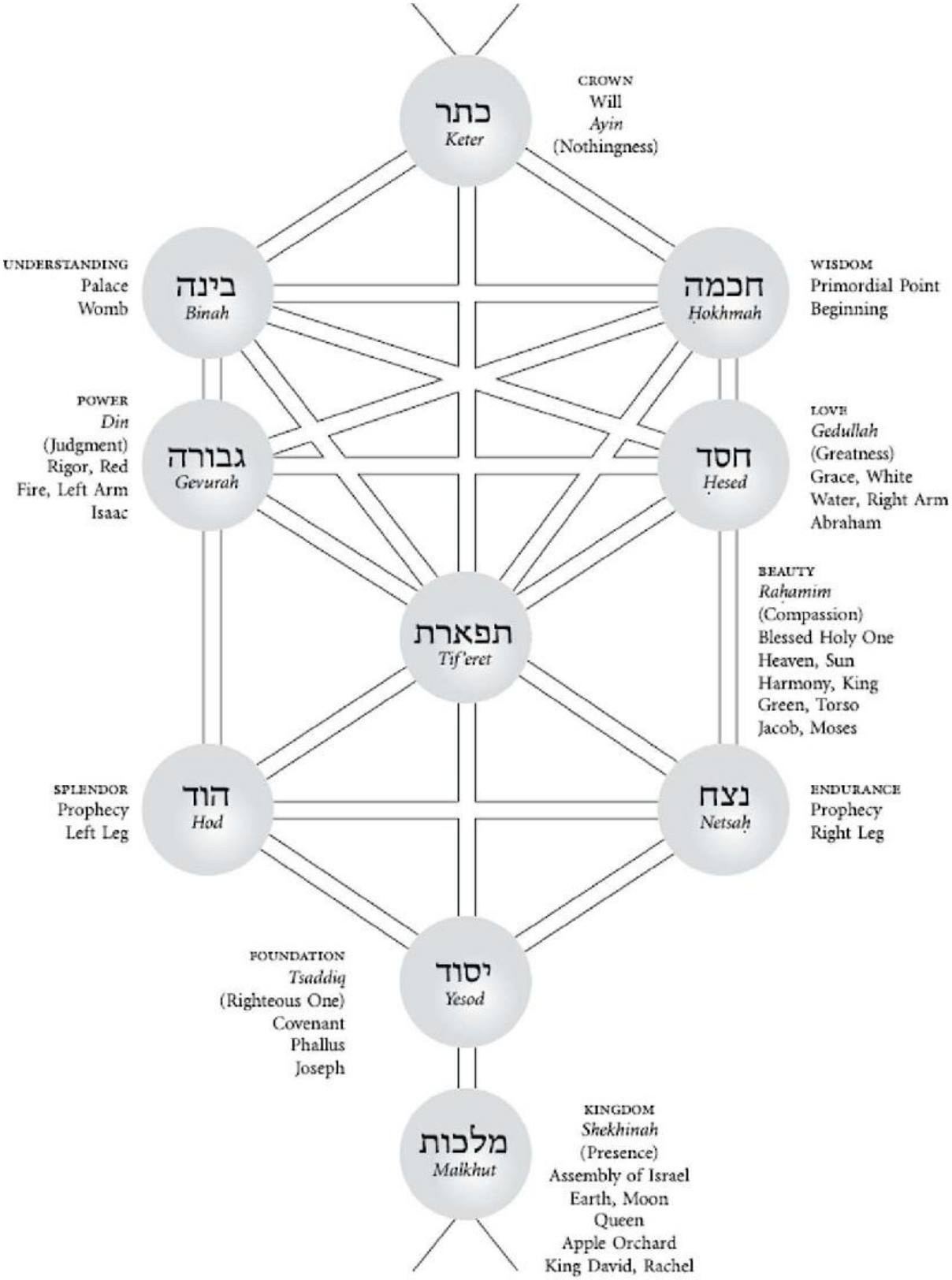
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The Ten Sefirot

Preface

This volume completes the main commentary of the *Zohar* on the Torah. Rabbi Shim'on and his Companions explore passages from the middle of the book of Numbers to the end of Deuteronomy.[1]

Among the remarkable sections is *Rav Metivta* (Master of the Academy), an account of a visionary journey by Rabbi Shim'on and some of the Companions to the Garden of Eden, where they discover secrets of the afterlife and mysteries of the soul.[2]

Later in the volume appears the story of the *Yanuqa* (Child), whom Rabbi Yitsḥak and Rabbi Yehudah encounter while on a journey. This colorful character is a wunderkind —and also a bit of a rascal. He alternates between amazing the rabbis and teasing them, impressing and then challenging (or stumping) them. The child prodigy spouts wisdom, spiced with humor.[3]

The *Yanuqa* is a famous Zoharic narrative. Another, lesser-known story of a remarkable child is embedded in a long narrative involving Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba. While traveling on the road, these two Companions go to visit the home of Rabbi Yose of Peki'in, a virtuous man who has just died. Entering his house, they find his little son weeping and moaning at the bedside. The boy cries out to God, insisting that the Master of the Universe has acted unjustly in taking the life of his father. Basing his impassioned argument on biblical verses, the child actually succeeds in reversing the divine decree, and his father is revived.[4]

Near the very end of the *Zohar* on the Torah comes the remarkable section known as *Idra Zuta* (The Small Assembly). This dramatic narrative forms part of the *Zohar*'s commentary on *Parashat Ha'azinu* in Deuteronomy, which features the Song of Moses, delivered shortly before his death. In the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shim'on is sometimes compared to Moses; and as the *Idra Zuta* opens, "the Companions gathered in the house of Rabbi Shim'on, and he was arranging his affairs to depart from the world." The master now reveals profound mysteries, many of them based on teachings from the earlier gathering known as *Idra Rabba* (The Great Assembly), but also including new secrets, especially relating to the Divine Masculine and Feminine. As Rabbi Shim'on says, "Holy words that I have not revealed until now, I wish to reveal in the presence of *Shekhinah*." He concludes with a detailed description—graphic yet cryptic—of the divine union. As he departs from this world, he assumes the role of the Divine Male, uniting ecstatically with *Shekhinah*. Thus Rabbi Shim'on's death becomes a joyous occasion, and a celestial voice announces his wedding celebration.[5]

As indicated above, this ninth volume of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* completes the *Zohar*'s main commentary on the Torah. Three additional volumes will include other sections of the *Zohar*, including *Midrash ha-Ne'lam, Zohar* on Song of Songs, *Matnitin, Tosefta, Sitrei Torah*, and *Heikhalot*. Those three volumes are being composed by my colleagues Nathan Wolski and Joel Hecker.

As I conclude my work of translation and annotation for *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, I wish to thank, first of all, Margot Pritzker, for inviting me to undertake this amazing journey and for sponsoring, sustaining, and guiding the immense project. Her passion for learning and her delight in Torah inspired me along the way, and the depth of her commitment stimulated my own. Thank you, Margot, for

providing me with the unique opportunity to delve into one of the most wondrous books ever written and to convey its radiant wisdom.

From the gestation of this project, Rabbi Yehiel Poupko has conducted it skillfully and fervently. Descended from a famous kabbalist, the *Shelah* (Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz), he is intimately bound to the *Zohar* and has devoted himself to spreading its light. I thank him for treasuring the sacred nature of this bold venture.

Glen Miller, vice president of Zohar Education Project, Inc., has vitalized this adventure through his vision and devotion. Over the years, he has navigated the ark of *Zohar* through numerous administrative passageways. Beyond his financial and legal acumen, he demonstrates a profound appreciation of the *Zohar*'s wisdom.

For the past eighteen years, Thomas J. Pritzker has generously supported this endeavor. Perhaps it is no coincidence that a man who avidly explores caves in order to discover ancient Asian art should fund the translation of the *Zohar*—which features stories such as this: "One day I was walking in the desert along with Rabbi Yehudah of Acre, and we entered a certain cave and found there an ancient book from olden days…." Moreover, according to tradition, the *Zohar* itself was composed in a cave.[6]

Arthur Green, as co-chair of the Academic Committee for the Translation of the *Zohar*, has helped to guide this project from its birth. I am grateful for his insight and advice, and for modeling how to blend scholarship with spirituality.

Throughout this long journey, the work of Yehuda Liebes has proven invaluable, as is evident from the frequent appearance of his name in the notes to each volume. Everyone who delves into the *Zohar* today is—or should be—his student.

I wish to thank Ronit Meroz, whose work has dramatically advanced the study of the manuscripts and

text of the *Zohar*. She has generously shared with me the data that she has collected relating to hundreds of these manuscripts, along with her analysis. Her research has provided me with a panoramic perspective on the manuscripts, helping me to determine their reliability.

Melila Hellner-Eshed has offered valuable suggestions and enthusiastic encouragement. Walking with her in both Jerusalem and Berkeley, sharing insights into *Zohar*, has been a joy.

Daniel Abrams has generously offered his expertise in a number of areas, including the evolution of the text and strata of the *Zohar*, the analysis of *Zohar* manuscripts, and even technical issues of design and formatting.

Over the years, Shlomo Naeh has answered all my questions about Semitic grammar, phonology, and vocalization. He has often helped me to scrutinize and transliterate the *Zohar*'s idiosyncratic, unwieldy Aramaic. Alan Godlas has been a valuable resource for questions pertaining to Arabic, Islam, and Sufism.

The team at Stanford University Press has worked devotedly and indefatigably to produce nine volumes of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*. I want to thank especially Mariana Raykov, Alan Harvey, Geoffrey Burn, Norris Pope, and Robert Ehle. Rabbi David E. S. Stein's superb copyediting and erudition have polished this *Book of Radiance*.

I am grateful as well to Merav Carmeli, who has combed Aramaic manuscripts of the *Zohar*, preparing lists of variant readings. This precious material enables me to establish a critical Aramaic text, upon which this translation is based.

I want to thank Jonatan Benarroch for preparing digital copies and precise lists of numerous *Zohar* manuscripts.

The critical Aramaic text corresponding to the first nine volumes of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* is available on the website of Stanford University Press. My brother, Rabbi

Jonathan Matt, has kindly and meticulously edited a user-friendly version of this text.[7]

My wife, Ḥana, and I have been delving together into the *Zohar* ever since we met, discovering and sharing its new-ancient meanings, gazing into each other's souls through its penetrating lens. Thank you, Ḥana, for your compassionate wisdom and unfailing support, for your boundless, joyous nature. You embody the verse in Proverbs (31:26): *On her tongue, a Torah of love*. You confirm the words of Rabbi El'azar (in *Zohar* 1:141a): "Isaac embraced faith, seeing *Shekhinah* dwelling in his wife."

Finally, to the One beyond all names: Blessed are You for enlivening and sustaining us, and for bringing us to this moment.

D.C.M.

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1. Actually, the main body of the *Zohar* (as preserved in manuscripts) does not include commentary on the end of Numbers or much of Deuteronomy. It is unclear whether such commentary has disappeared or whether it was never composed. The standard printed editions of the *Zohar* include much material from *Ra'aya Meheimna* on parts of Numbers and Deuteronomy. As mentioned in Vol. 1 (p. xv, n. 2), *Ra'aya Meheimna*—which is a later imitation of the *Zohar*—is not included in *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*.

2. See *Zohar* 3:162a–174a; below, pp. 54–151.

3. See *Zohar* 3:186a–192a; below, pp. 245–96.

4. See *Zohar* 3:204b–205a; below, pp. 323–25. The full narrative extends from pp. 307–63; until now it has never been published entirely in its correct sequence. See below, p. 307, n. 36.

5. See *Zohar* 3:287b–296b; below, pp. 767–849. On the comparison (and contrast) between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see below, p. 767, n. 1. On Rabbi Shim'on's

“wedding celebration,” see below, pp. 800–801, n. 99; p. 848, n. 237.

6. See below, pp. 314–19 and n. 59.

7. The site is www.sup.org/zohar. For a description of the various online versions of the critical text, see the website. For my methodology in constructing this text, see the website and Volume 1, Translator’s Introduction, pp. xv–xviii.

THE ZOHAR

פרשת שלח לך

Parashat Shelaḥ Lekha

“SEND FOR YOURSELF” (NUMBERS 13:1–15:41)

COMMENTARY ON SHELAḤ LEKHA

YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, “Send for yourself men, that they may scout the land of Canaan…” (Numbers 13:1).[1]

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, *“Have you ever in your life commanded morning,* ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn, its place?* (Job 38:12). It is written שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*, with ה (*he*) distant from שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*—why?”[2]

Well, Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “When evening extends and the sun’s strength wanes, the left reigns, Judgment prevails in the world, and night spreads. Then a person must direct his intention toward his Lord.[3]

“For Rabbi Yeisa said: When the sun declines and weakens, one aperture in the sun opens and its potency is drawn in; the left reigns, and Isaac digs a well below.[4]

“As night enters, a slip of plucking appears in its ledger, and numerous ravaging bands are cast into the world—all roaming in confusion, moving about and toying with souls of the wicked, disseminating false information to them, and sometimes true. If anyone is found among them, they are authorized to harm him; and all inhabitants of the world are absorbed in sleep, tasting a taste of death, as we have already established.[5]

“Come and see: When a north wind is aroused, Assembly of Israel is received by the left and they join as one, and She settles in the arm, in Her place. The blessed Holy One comes to delight with the righteous in the Garden

of Eden; and whoever awakens then to study Torah participates with Her—for She sits with all Her cohorts and praises the supernal King—and all those engaged in the celebration of Torah are all recorded among the members of the palace and called by name, and these are distinguished during the day.[6]

"Come and see: There is one Holy Name in engraved letters, ruling from midnight on, included in the letters צ פ כ מ נ (*mem, nun, tsadi, pe, kaf*). ם (*Mem*), as has been established: למרבה (*le-marbeh*), *of the increase of, dominion* (Isaiah 9:6).[7]

"ם (*Mem*) was concealed on this side and on that; then it was combined as two. י (*Yod*) of the Holy Name established it, sealing Her springs. After She gave birth, it was open at one head of the opening.[8]

"When the Temple was destroyed, springs were sealed on all sides. This ם (*mem*) includes other letters, totaling seven: three from this side and four from the other side. ל ך כ (*Kaf, lamed*, final *kaf*)—your mnemonic is: כלך (*Kullakh*), *All of you, is beautiful, my love; there is no blemish in you* (Song of Songs 4:7).[9]

"ן (*Nun*)—male and female, merged as one. This includes three from here and three from there, totaling six.[10]

"We have established: In these two letters—ם (*mem*), ן (*nun*)—are included twelve letters. Remove two from them: one for one letter, and one for the other.[11]

"כל״ך סעפ״א אענצ״ה (*Kaf, lamed*, final *kaf; samekh, ayin, pe, alef; alef, ayin, nun, tsadi, he*). Thus letters were engraved. This mystery is in *Ki Tetse la-Milḥamah, When You Go Out to War*, in the verse *If there is* נערה (*na'arah*), *a girl, a virgin* (Deuteronomy 22:23)—spelled נער (*na'ara*).[12]

"After night departs and morning shines, ה (*he*) ascends and is absorbed in light. Then, ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn, its place* (Job 38:12)—for surely, שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*, is the *place* of ה (*he*), included within it.[13]

"Come and see: Moses was the sun, and he wished to enter the Land. The blessed Holy One said to Moses, 'When

light arrives, the moon is included [157a] in it. Now that you are the sun, how can sun and moon stand together? The moon shines when the sun is gathered in—but now you cannot. If you want to know about it, שלח לך (*Shelaḥ lekha*), *Send for yourself, men* (Numbers 13:1). *For yourself*—for your own sake, in order to know.'[14]

"Come and see: If you say that Moses didn't know that he would not enter the Land at this time—not so! Rather, he knew; and he wanted to know about it before he departed, so he sent these messengers. Since they did not report back properly, he did not send again, until finally the blessed Holy One showed him, as is written: *Go up to this Mount Abarim and see the land* (Numbers 27:12), and it is written *YHVH showed him the whole land*… (Deuteronomy 34:1). Not only this, but all those who were destined to arise in every single generation, all of them He showed to Moses—as has been said, and as the Companions have established.[15]

"As Moses began to send them, what did he say? בה עץ היש (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Is there a tree in it?* (Numbers 13:20). Now, what was he saying? If you think that he didn't know—well, further on this matter will be discussed; but here Moses said, *'Is there a tree in it?* Then I know that I will enter there.' What is this tree? The Tree of Life. And it was not there, but rather in the terrestrial Garden of Eden. He said, *'Is there* this *tree in it?* Then I will enter there. And if not, I cannot.'"[16]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, *"They found a man gathering* עצים (*etsim*), *wood, on the Sabbath day* (Numbers 15:32). What is meant here by *etsim*, and who is this person? Well, this is Zelophehad, and he was examining these trees carefully: which of them is greater than the other? He showed no concern for the glory of his Lord and switched one Sabbath for the other, as is written: *rather*, בחטאו (*ve-ḥet'o*), *for his own sin, he died* (Numbers 27:3)—ובחטא (*ve-ḥet vav*), *for the sin of vav, he died.* Mystery of all: surely, *gathering etsim, trees.* Consequently, his judgment was concealed—not

stated explicitly like other judgments—because this matter must remain in secrecy, sealed and not revealed. So it was not mentioned openly, and the blessed Holy One glorified His glory."[17]

Rabbi Yose said, "He was *gathering* other *trees* together with *the Sabbath*, and he received a timely punishment and his sin was purged. So Moses had difficulty in judging his daughters, since he did not know if he had been purged—so his daughters could have an inherited share—or not. As soon as He mentioned his name, it was evident that his sin was expiated.[18]

"Come and see: There are two Trees, one above and one below: in this one, death; in that one, life. Whoever switches them brings death upon himself in this world and has no share in that world. Of this Solomon said *If you find honey, eat just enough, lest you have your fill and vomit it up* (Proverbs 25:16).[19]

"The Ark and Torah exist as one; Torah is essence, the Ark a house. Therefore ארון (*aron*), Ark, is always spelled deficiently, without a ו (*vav*): ארן (*aron*), *the Ark of, the Covenant*; ארן (*aron*), *the Ark of, the Testimony*.[20]

"אהרן (*Aharon*), Aaron, is always the right arm, except once where it is written *These are the reckonings that Moses and Aaron reckoned* (Numbers 1:44)—dotted above."[21]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Moses grasped the Tree of Life; so he wanted to know whether it was located in the Land or not. Therefore he said *Summon your strength and take some of the fruit of the land* (Numbers 13:20), for the Tree of Life is desirable to all; but they brought back only grapes, pomegranates, and figs, hanging from and attached to another Tree.[22]

"Come and see: *Send for yourself men*—for your own sake."[23]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *“Like the chill of snow on a harvest day, a faithful envoy to his senders: he restores his master’s soul* (Proverbs 25:13). *Like the chill of snow on a harvest day*—benefiting body and soul.

“*A faithful envoy to his senders*—Caleb and Phinehas, who were faithful messengers of Joshua.[24]

“*He restores his master’s soul*—for they restored *Shekhinah* to dwell among Israel, and She did not depart from them.[25]

“Those whom Moses sent caused weeping for later generations, caused many thousands and myriads to perish from Israel, and caused *Shekhinah* to depart from the Land, from the midst of Israel. Whereas those whom Joshua sent —*he restores his master’s soul*.”[26]

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa were walking on the way. Rabbi Yeisa said to Rabbi Ḥizkiyah, “I see by your face that a thought possesses you.”[27]

He replied, “Surely, I am pondering this verse, since Solomon said *For the fate of human beings and the fate of the beast is all a single fate. As one dies, so dies the other, and all have a single spirit, and the human’s advantage over the beast is nothing, for all is mere breath* (Ecclesiastes 3:19). Yet we have learned that all the words of King Solomon are sealed in rungs of wisdom. If so, this verse should be examined, for it provides an opening for those who are not scions of [157b] faith.”[28]

He said to him, “Certainly so! This needs to be understood and examined.”

Just then, they saw a man approaching. He asked them for water, since he was thirsty and weary from the intensity of the sun.

They said to him, “Who are you?”

He replied, “I’m a Jew, and I’m weary and thirsty.”

They said to him, “Have you been toiling in Torah?”

He replied, “Before sharing words with you, I’ll climb this mountain, where there’s some water, and I’ll drink.”

Rabbi Yeisa took out a canteen full of water and gave it to him. He said, “We’ll go up with you for water. Have a drink.”[29]

After he drank, they climbed the mountain and found a slender ribbon of water and filled one waterskin. They sat down.[30]

That man said to them, “Now, ask! For I’ve engaged in Torah through a son of mine whom I put in school. Thanks to him, I’ve gained some Torah.”

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah said, “If it’s through your son, that’s fine. But I see that the matter in which we are immersed must be raised elsewhere.”[31]

That man said, “Speak your word, for sometimes in a poor man’s undergarment you’ll find a pearl.”[32]

He quoted to him the verse spoken by Solomon, and told him about it.[33]

He said to them, “How are you distinguished from other people who don’t know?”

They replied, “So how?”[34]

He said, “This is why Solomon spoke the verse. He wasn’t saying this on his own, like his other words; rather, he was repeating the words of fools of the world, who talk like this. What do they say? *For* מקרה (*miqreh*), *the fate of, human beings and miqreh, the fate of, the beast* [is *a single miqreh, fate*]. Fools who neither know nor ponder wisdom say that this world proceeds במקרה (*be-miqreh*), by chance, and that the blessed Holy One has no concern for them; rather, *the fate of human beings and the fate of the beast is all a single fate*.[35]

“When Solomon looked upon these fools who say this, he called them *beast*, since they make themselves actual beasts by saying these things. How do we know? The preceding verse proves it, as is written: *I said in my heart in regard to human beings, ‘God has sifted them out to show*

that they themselves are nothing but beasts’ (Ecclesiastes 3:18). *I said in my heart*—and I intended to examine this. To examine what? על דברת (*Al divrat*), *concerning the speech of, human beings*—concerning those words of foolishness that they utter.[36]

“*God has sifted them out*—all alone, so that they won’t join with other people who have faith.[37]

“*To show that they themselves are nothing but beasts*—those scions of faith will see that they are really beasts and their minds like beasts. *Themselves*—all alone, so as not to draw the scions of faith into this foolish opinion. So, *themselves*, and not affecting others.

“What is their opinion? *For the fate of human beings and the fate of the beast is all a single fate. As one dies, so dies the other, and all have a single spirit, and the human’s advantage over the beast is nothing* (ibid., 19). May the spirit of those beasts expire—those fools, those faithless ones! Woe to them, woe to their souls! Better for them if they had never come into the world![38]

“And how did Solomon answer them? With the following verse: *Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the beast’s spirit descends to the earth?* (ibid., 21). *Who knows?*—among those fools, who do not know the glory of the supernal King and do not gaze upon Torah.

“*If the human spirit rises upward*—to a sublime place, a precious place, a holy place; to be nourished by supernal radiance, by radiance of the Holy King; to be bound in the Bundle of Life and appear before the Holy King as a pure עולה (*olah*), ascent offering, surely; *she is* העולה (*ha-olah*), *the very ascent offering* (Leviticus 6:2); העולה היא למעלה (*ha-olah hi le-ma’lah*), *if she rises upward* (Ecclesiastes 3:21).[39]

“*And if the beast’s spirit descends to the earth*—to that certain place. But as for the human being—of whom is written *In the image of God He made the human* (Genesis 9:6); and similarly, *The spirit of a human is the lamp of YHVH* (Proverbs 20:27)—how can those faithless fools say that

they have a single spirit (Ecclesiastes 3:19)? May their spirit expire! Of them is written *They will be like chaff before the wind, YHVH's angel driving them on* (Psalms 35:5). These will remain in Hell among the lower levels, and will not ascend for generations upon generations. Of them is written *Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH, Hallelujah!* (Psalms 104:35)."[40]

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa came and kissed his head. They said, "So much was within you, and we didn't know! Happy is the moment when we met you!" [158a]

He said further, "Did Solomon wonder about this alone? Look, in another place he spoke similarly!"[41]

He opened, saying, "*This is evil in all that is done under the sun* (Ecclesiastes 9:3). *This is evil*, surely! What is meant by *this is evil*? That such a person does not abide with the blessed Holy One and has no share in the world that is coming, as is written: *For You are not a God delighting in wickedness; evil cannot abide with You* (Psalms 5:5). Of this he said *This is evil*, for he will have no dwelling above.[42]

"*That a single fate awaits all, and also the heart of human beings is full of evil* (Ecclesiastes 9:3). Consequently, *there is madness in their hearts while they live* (ibid.)—foolishness is embedded in their hearts; they are lacking faith and have no share in the blessed Holy One or among those scions of faith, neither in this world nor in the other world, as is written: *and afterward—off to the dead!* (ibid.).[43]

"Come and see: The blessed Holy One warned the inhabitants of the world, saying, *Choose life, so that you may live* (Deuteronomy 30:19)—in this world and in the world that is coming, and [true] life is in that world. Those wicked faithless ones, what do they say? '*For he who chooses* (Ecclesiastes 9:4)—even if a person chooses that world (as we have said), it is not life. For we possess this tradition: *All the living have something to trust in* (ibid.).'

And they also possess this tradition: *for surely a live dog is better than a dead lion* (ibid.). How will they have life in that world?[44]

"So, *this is evil*, surely, since they will not dwell with the supernal King nor have any share in Him. Although you may find all these verses supporting the Companions for other statements, yet surely Solomon intended to reveal that those wicked faithless ones have no share in the blessed Holy One, neither in this world nor in the world that is coming."[45]

They said to him, "Would you like us to join as one, so that you may accompany us?"

He replied, "If I did so, Torah would call me a fool. Not only that, but I would be forfeiting my life!"

They asked, "Why?"

He replied, "Because I am a messenger, sent on a mission, and King Solomon said, *He cuts off his own legs, drinking violence, he who sends words by a fool* (Proverbs 26:6).

"Come and see: The spies, because they failed to be faithful messengers, forfeited their lives in this world and in the world that is coming."[46]

He kissed them and went on his way.

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa traveled on. As they were going, they met some people. Rabbi Ḥizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa asked about him, saying, "What's the name of that man?"

They replied, "He is Rabbi Ḥaggai, one of the Companions, and the Companions of Babylon sent him to learn things from Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai and the other Companions."

Rabbi Yeisa said, "This is certainly Rabbi Ḥaggai, who all his life never wished to show himself off as learned. That's why he told us that his son enabled him to attain Torah. For he recited the verse *Have you seen a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him*

(Proverbs 26:12). He is surely a faithful messenger. Happy is a faithful messenger, and happy is one who sends his words by the hand of a faithful messenger![47]

"Come and see: Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, was a descendant of Canaan—as is said: *A Canaanite, in whose hand are false balances* (Hosea 12:8). Of him is written *Cursed be Canaan…* (Genesis 9:25). But since he was a faithful servant, what is written? *Come in, blessed of* YHVH (ibid. 24:31)—*blessed of* YHVH Himself! Therefore it is written so in the Torah, for he escaped from that curse and was blessed; it wasn't sufficient that he escaped it, but he was blessed in the name of the blessed Holy One. And I have learned that an angel came and inserted these words into Laban's mouth."[48]

Moses sent them from the Desert of Paran by YHVH*'s word, all of them personages* (Numbers 13:3). They were entirely virtuous, heads of Israel; but they followed their own bad advice. Why did they do so? Well, they said, "If Israel enters the Land, we will be deposed as heads, and Moses will appoint other heads; for we deserved to be heads in the desert, but in the Land we will not." Because they took their own bad advice, they died, along with all those who accepted their words.[49] [158b]

These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to scout the land (Numbers 13:16). Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Moses gazed and knew that they would not succeed in their mission, so he prayed for Joshua. Then Caleb was in distress. He said, 'What will I do? Look, Joshua is going with heavenly help; Moses infused him with radiance of the moon, and illumined him with his prayer, since he is the sun!' What did Caleb do? He slipped away from them and approached the graves of the patriarchs, where he offered his prayer."[50]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “He took a different route, winding his way, and reached the patriarchs’ graves. He endangered himself, for it is written: *There were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, offspring of the giant* (Numbers 13:22). But someone in distress does not notice anything; so Caleb—being in distress—did not notice anything, and he came to pray over the patriarchs’ graves, in order to be saved from this plan.”[51]

Moses called הושע (*Hoshe’a*), *Hosea, the son of Nun* יהושע (*Yehoshu’a*), *Joshua* (Numbers 13:16). Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Did Scripture ever call him *Hoshe’a*? Look at what is written: *Moses said to Yehoshu’a, ‘Choose men for us’* (Exodus 17:9); *Yehoshu’a disabled* [*Amalek*] (ibid., 13); *Yehoshu’a son of Nun, a youth* (ibid. 33:11)! However, Moses said to him,‘יה יושיעך (*Yah yoshi’akha*), May *Yah* save you, from them.’”[52]

Rabbi Abba said, “Since he sent him to enter there, he had to be complete. How? With *Shekhinah*. For until that time he was called נער (*na’ar*), *a youth*, as we have established; and at that moment Moses linked him with Her. Although we find the name Joshua previously, Scripture calls him so because of what he is destined to be called. Moses said, ‘This one surely must not enter there except with *Shekhinah*, as is fitting.’”[53]

היש בה עץ אם אין (*Ha-yesh bah ets im ayin*), *Is there a tree in it or not?*… (Numbers 13:20).[54]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Now, didn’t Moses know that there were various trees in it, different from one another? Look, he himself praised it to Israel several times, and now he was uncertain about this? Look, the blessed Holy One told Moses previously that it was *a land flowing with milk and honey* (Exodus 3:8)!”[55]

Rabbi Yose said, “The Companions have already noted that it is written *There was a man in the land of* עוץ (*uts*), *Uz, named Job* (Job 1:1).”[56]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “He offered them a hint of wisdom, alluding to what they had asked previously, as is written: *Is YHVH in our midst or* אין (*ayin*), *Nothingness?* (Exodus 17:7). He said, ‘There you will see if it is worthy of one or the other.’ He said to them, ‘If you see that the fruit of the land is like that of other lands of the world, then יש בה עץ (*yesh bah ets*), *It has a tree*—and not from a higher place. But if you see that the fruit of the land is superior to and different from anywhere in the world, you will know that this supernal unique difference flows and draws from the Holy Ancient One. Thereby you will know *Is there a tree in it or ayin, Nothingness?* This is asking more than before, when you asked to know this by your bellies, as is written: *Is YHVH* בקרבנו (*be-qirbenu*), *in our midst—be-qirbenu, in our entrails*, precisely!—*or ayin, Nothingness?* So, *Summon your strength and take some of the fruit of the land* (Numbers 13:20)—to know its distinct quality.’”[57]

And the days were the days of the first ripe grapes (Numbers 13:20). *And the days*—what does this indicate, since it would have been sufficient to say *Then was the time of the first ripe grapes*? Well, *and the days*—the well-known ones, all of which were joined at that time to the Tree against which Adam sinned, as we have learned: “They were grapes.” So, *and the days*—the well-known ones—*were the days of the first ripe grapes*, precisely![58]

They went up through the Negeb ויבא (*va-yavo*), *and came, to Hebron* (Numbers 13:22). ויבא (*Va-yavo*), *And he came*—the verse should read ויבאו (*va-yavo’u*), *and they came*. Well, Rabbi Yose said, “It was Caleb, who came to pray over the graves of the patriarchs. Caleb said, ‘Joshua was blessed by Moses with holy supernal assistance, so he can be saved from them. As for me, what will I do?’ He determined to make a plea over the patriarchs’ graves in order to be saved from the other spies’ scheme.”[59]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “The one who was more distinguished than all of them—this one entered him, for all depends upon it.

“Come and see: The one who is distinguished empowered him to enter the cave. For who among the others could enter there, since it is written *There were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai,* [*offspring of the giant*] (Numbers 13:22)? From fear of them, who could enter [159a] the cave? But *Shekhinah* entered there into Caleb, to inform the patriarchs that the time had arrived for their children to enter the land that the blessed Holy One had sworn to give them. This is: *He came to Hebron*.[60]

“It has been taught: From whom did Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai issue? Well, they were the seed of those *Nephilim*, Fallen Ones, whom the blessed Holy One cast down to earth and who saw the daughters of the earth—and from whom issued the mighty men of the world, as is written: *These are* הגבורים אשר מעולם אנשי השם (*ha-gibborim asher me-olam anshei ha-shem*), *the mighty ones of old, men of renown* (Genesis 6:4). *Me-olam, Of the world*, really, attending to the world; *anshei ha-shem, men of the name*—Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai.”[61]

They came to Wadi Eshcol, and they cut down from there a branch… (Numbers 13:23).[62]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*Thus says God, YHVH, who creates the heavens and stretches them out, who spreads out the earth and what emerges from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk thereon* (Isaiah 42:5). How carefully should people contemplate the worship of the blessed Holy One! How carefully should they contemplate the words of Torah! For whoever engages in Torah is as if he brings all the offerings of the world before the blessed Holy One. Not only that, but the blessed Holy One forgives all his sins, and many thrones are prepared for

him in the world that is coming."[63]

Rabbi Yehudah was walking on the way along with Rabbi Abba. He said to him, "One thing I would like to ask: since the blessed Holy One knew that the human being would eventually sin before Him and be condemned to death, why did He create him? After all, the Torah existed two thousand years before the world was created, and in the Torah is written *When a person dies in a tent* (Numbers 19:14); *If a man dies* (ibid. 27:8); so-and-so lived and died. Why does the blessed Holy One want a human in this world? Even if he delves into Torah day and night, he will die; and if he doesn't delve, he will die! All follow the same course—except for the distinction of that world—as is said: *as for the good, so for the sinner* (Ecclesiastes 9:2)."[64]

He replied, "Why do you trouble with the ways and decrees of your Lord? What you are permitted to know and to contemplate, ask; and as for what you are not permitted to know, it is written *Do not let your mouth make your flesh sin* (Ecclesiastes 5:5). For the ways of the blessed Holy One, and the supernal hidden secrets that He has sealed and treasured away, we should not ask about."[65]

He said to him, "If so, surely the entire Torah is concealed and hidden, for it is the supernal Holy Name, and whoever engages in Torah is as if he engages in His Holy Name. If so, we shouldn't ask or contemplate [Torah]!"[66]

He replied, "The entire Torah is concealed and revealed, and the Holy Name is concealed and revealed, and it is written: *The hidden things are for YHVH our God, and the revealed are for us and for our children* (Deuteronomy 29:28). *The revealed are for us*—for we are permitted to ask and inspect, to contemplate and know them. However, *the hidden things are for YHVH our God*—they are His, befitting Him; for who can know and grasp His concealed mind, let alone question it?[67]

"Come and see: Inhabitants of the world are not permitted to utter concealed words and expound them—

except for the Holy Lamp, Rabbi Shim'on, since the blessed Holy One has authorized him, and because his generation is distinguished above and below. Therefore, words are spoken openly by him; and there will be no generation like this one, in which he dwells, until King Messiah comes.[68]

"But come and see! It is written: *God created the human in His image; in the image of God He created him* (Genesis 1:27), and he resembles entirely the paradigm above.[69]

"Come and see: The blessed Holy One has three worlds, in which He is hidden. First world—that supernal one, most concealed of all, which is neither known nor glimpsed, except by Him.[70]

"Second world—a world that is linked with the one above. This is the one by which the blessed Holy One is known, as is written: *Open for me the gates of righteousness; this is the gate to* YHVH (Psalms 118:19–20). This is the second world.[71]

"Third world—the world below them, where separation exists. This is the world in which supernal angels dwell, and the blessed Holy One exists there and does not. He is there now, yet when they wish to see and know Him, He departs from them and is not seen—until all of them ask, 'Where is the place of His glory? *Blessed be the glory of* YHVH *from His place* (Ezekiel 3:12).' This is a world where He is not present constantly.[72]

"Similarly, *In the image of God He made the human* (Genesis 9:6), so he has [159b] three worlds. First world—this world, called World of Separation, and the human being exists there and does not. When they wish to see him, he departs from them and is not seen.[73]

"Second world—a world that is linked with the higher world. This is the terrestrial Garden of Eden, which is linked with another, higher world; and from this the other world is known and recognized.[74]

“Third world—a supernal concealed world, hidden and secret, unknown by anyone, as is written: *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*] (Isaiah 64:3).[75]

“All corresponds to the supernal original pattern that I mentioned, so truly *in the image of God He made the human* (Genesis 9:6).[76]

“Come and see: Surely of this is written *You are children of YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:1), as has been established. These inherit from Father on high a legacy resembling Him. Therefore the Torah warns: *You shall not gash yourselves, nor shall you make a bald spot* (ibid.). For it does not perish; it exists—invited to endure in fine, sublime, and precious worlds. If inhabitants of the world knew that the human being does not perish, but rather exists in supernal, precious worlds, they would rejoice upon departing from this world.[77]

“Come and see: If a human did not sin, he would not taste the taste of death in this world when he enters other worlds; but since he sins, he tastes the taste of death before entering those worlds. *Ruḥa*, the spirit, is stripped of this body, which it leaves in this world. The spirit is cleansed, receiving punishment, and then enters the terrestrial Garden of Eden, where another garment, of light, awaits it—just like the form of the body of this world—in which it is clothed and arrayed.[78]

“There is its abode continually, and on new moons and Sabbaths it is joined with *nishmeta*, the soul—and it ascends and is crowned high above, as is written: *From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath*, [*all flesh shall come to bow down before Me—says YHVH*] (Isaiah 66:23).[79]

“Why *from new moon to new moon*? Well, mystery of the matter: because of renewal of the moon, adorned in its crowns to shine from the sun at that time. Similarly, *from Sabbath to Sabbath. From Sabbath*—the moon. *To Sabbath*

—the sun, since light reaches Her from there. So all is one matter.[80]

"This is elucidation of the matter—except for the wicked, for whom death is inscribed in all those worlds and who are cut off from all those worlds. These are eradicated entirely, if they do not enter *teshuvah*."[81]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One, that I asked and gained these words—and comprehended them!"

Rabbi Shim'on said, "From this portion we learn a mystery of wisdom; and sublime, precious secrets become known. Come and see: The blessed Holy One praises Torah, saying, 'Follow My ways, engage in My service, and I will bring you into fine worlds, supernal worlds.' To people who do not know or believe or perceive, the blessed Holy One says, 'Go and scout that fine world, that world of sublime yearning!'[82]

"They say, 'How can we scout it and know all this?'

"What is written? *Go up this way into the Negeb* (Numbers 13:17)—'Delve into Torah, and you will see that she stands before you, and through her you will know that [world].'[83]

"*Observe the land: what is it like? And the people inhabiting it* (ibid., 18)—'Through her you will see that world, which is an inheritance into which I am bringing you.'[84]

"*And the people inhabiting it*—'those righteous ones in the Garden of Eden, standing row by row in supernal glory, on lofty rungs.'

"*Are they strong or slack* (ibid.)—'Through her, you will see if they attained all this by overpowering their impulse and breaking it, or not. Or by grasping Torah firmly, studying her day and night; or if they slackened their grip on her and [still] attained all this.'[85]

"*Are they few or many?* (ibid.)—'Are there many who engage in My service and hold fast to Torah, thereby

attaining all this, or not?’

“*And what is the land like, is it fat or lean?* (Numbers 13:20)—‘Through Torah you will know *what the land is like*, what that world is like: does it lavish sublime goodness upon its inhabitants, or withhold something?’[86]

“*Is there a tree in it or not?* (ibid.)—‘Is the Tree of Eternal Life in it, or does the Bundle of Life exist in it, or not?’[87] [160a]

“*They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron* (Numbers 13:22). *They went up* בנגב (*va-Negev*), *into the Negeb*—people ascend in her *va-negev, with aridity*, with a lazy heart: like someone trying uselessly, aridly, thinking it brings no reward. He sees that the riches of the world are lost because of her; he thinks that all is *va-negev, with aridity* —as is said: *The waters* חרבו (*ḥarevu*), *dried up* (Genesis 8:13), ‘The waters נגובו (*neguvu*), dried up.’[88]

“Afterward, ויבא עד חברון (*va-yavo ad Ḥevron*), *and he came to Hebron*—finally coming לאתחברא (*le-itḥabbara*), to join, her, reading and rereading her.[89]

“*There were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai* (Numbers 13:22)—there he sees many divisions: impure and pure, prohibition and permission, punishments and rewards. These are the ways of Torah, fine points of Torah.[90]

“*Offspring of the giant* (ibid.)—born from the side of *Gevurah*.[91]

“*Hebron was built seven years* (ibid.)—seventy branches of Torah, seventy faces, ten in each aspect. חברון (*Ḥevron*), *Hebron*, is Torah, and whoever delves into her is called חבר (*ḥaver*), companion.[92]

“*Before Zoan in Egypt* (ibid.). We have learned: There is Torah corresponding to Torah, namely Written Torah and Oral Torah. Hebron issues from Written Torah, as is said: *Say to Wisdom, ‘You are my sister’* (Proverbs 7:4). And this *was built seven years*, which is why it is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven.[93]

“*Before Zoan in Egypt*—as is said: *The wisdom of Solomon was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt* (1 Kings 5:10).[94]

“*They came to Wadi* אשכול (*Eshkol*), *Eshcol* (Numbers 13:23)—words of *haggadah* and interpretation, hanging from the aspect of Faith.[95]

“*And they cut down from there a branch with one* אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster, of grapes* (ibid.)—they learn from there chapter headings and initial words. Those who are scions of faith delight in these words, and the words are blessed within them; and they perceive one root, one source, with no division among them.[96]

“Those who are not scions of faith and do not study Torah for its own sake consign faith to division, as is written: *They carried it* במוט בשנים (*ba-mot bi-shnayim*), *on a pole in two* (ibid.)—in division. What is meant by מוט (*mot*), *a pole*? As is said: *He will not let your foot* למוט (*la-mot*), *stumble* (Psalms 121:3).[97]

“*And some* רמונים (*rimmonim*), *pomegranates, and some* תאנים (*te’enim*), *figs* (Numbers 13:23)—placing everything on the Other Side, the side of מינאי (*mina’ei*), heretics, the side of division.[98]

“*They returned from scouting the land* (Numbers 13:25). *They returned*—returning to the evil side, turning from the way of truth. They say, ‘What do we care? To this day, we haven’t seen the slightest benefit. We’ve toiled in it—the house is empty! We are the laughingstock of the people. Who will ever attain that world? Who will enter it? Better for us if we hadn’t troubled so hard!’[99]

“*They recounted to him and said*, [‘*We came to the land you sent us to*’] (Numbers 13:27)—‘Look, we’ve toiled wearily to know the portion of that world, *and it is truly flowing with milk and honey* (ibid.); that world on high is good, as we know from Torah. But who can ever attain it?’[100]

"*But mighty are the people inhabiting the land* (Numbers 13:28)—he is strong, not esteeming the whole world at all, so that he may have great wealth to engage in Torah. Who can attain it? Surely, *but mighty are the people inhabiting the land*—whoever wishes to attain it must be mighty in wealth, as is said: *The rich one answers mightily* (Proverbs 18:23).[101]

"*And the cities are fortified and huge* (Numbers 13:28)—houses filled with all good, so that nothing will be lacking. Even so, *and also the offspring of the giant we saw there* (ibid.)—the body must be mighty as a lion, constantly present, since [Torah] saps a person's strength, when he delves into prohibition and permission, impure and pure, kosher and unkosher. Who can attain it?[102]

"Furthermore, *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land; and the Hittite*, [*the Jebusite, and the Amorite inhabit the hill country; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and by the Jordan*] (Numbers 13:29). If a person says, 'Even so, I will succeed,' *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land*—here is the evil impulse, the accuser, denouncing a person, always present in the body. *And the Hittite, the Amorite*…—how many accusers appear there, preventing a person from ever entering that world! Who can attain it? Who can enter it? [103]

"With these words, *they disheartened the Children of Israel* (Numbers 32:9), since they defamed it, as is said: *They put forth an evil report of the land* (ibid. 13:32).[104]

"What did those scions of faith say? *If YHVH delights in us, He will give it to us* (Numbers 14:8). Once a person strives with aspiration of the heart toward the blessed Holy One—surely He desires from us only the heart, and that they guard that holy insignia, as is written: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever* (Isaiah 60:21).[105]

"However, [160b] *Only do not rebel against YHVH!* (Numbers 14:9)—one should not rebel against Torah, for

Torah does not require wealth or vessels of silver and gold.[106]

"*And you, do not fear the people of the land* (ibid.)—for if a broken body engages in Torah, it will find healing entirely, as is written: *It will be healing for your flesh and moistening for your bones* (Proverbs 3:8), and similarly: *and healing to all their flesh* (ibid. 4:22). Then all those accusers proclaim: 'Make room for so-and-so, servant of the King!' So, *do not fear!*[107]

"*For they are our bread* (Numbers 14:9)—they themselves provide food every day for those engaging in Torah, as is said: *The ravens I have commanded to sustain you* (1 Kings 17:4), and it is written *The ravens would bring him bread and meat* (ibid., 6).[108]

"*Their shadow has abandoned them* (Numbers 14:9). Who is *their shadow*? The power of harsh Judgment. Why did it depart? Because *YHVH is with us. Do not fear them!* (ibid.). All departs on account of Torah.[109]

"Happy is the share of those who engage in Torah for her own sake, for they are actually linked with the blessed Holy One and called His brothers and companions, as is written: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, 'Peace be within you'* (Psalms 122:8)."[110]

They came to Wadi Eshcol, and they cut down from there a branch [*with one cluster of grapes*…] (Numbers 13:23).[111]

Rabbi Abba said, "They cut down that *cluster*, and when they tried to lift it they couldn't. They tried to move it and they couldn't. Caleb and Joshua came, took hold of it and lifted it, and it was raised upright by them, as is written: *they carried it on a pole held by two* (ibid.)—those two unique ones.[112]

"Why did they need *a branch*? Well, the *cluster* was hanging from it. As long as it was attached to its place, it was called *a branch*; afterward, Scripture called it *a pole*,

as is written: *they carried it* במוט (*va-mot*), *on the pole*—that well-known one, the one they cut down.[113]

"From here Caleb and Joshua knew that they were worthy of entering the Land and obtaining an inherited share in it. As [the scouts] were proceeding, all of them conspired against [Caleb and Joshua]. Caleb stood facing the fruit, and said, 'Fruit, fruit, if on account of you we're going to be killed, why should we share in you?' Immediately, it lightened itself, and they gave it to [the other scouts]."[114]

Rabbi El'azar said, "They didn't give it to the others, for it is surely written: *which they carried* and also *by two*; and among all of them, there were not *two* such as them. From here, Joshua learned a lesson for later, as is written: *Joshua son of Nun sent from Shittim two men as spies* (Joshua 2:1), and the identity of these two has already been established by the ancient ones. When they reached the Israelites, they gave it to them and then withdrew, making themselves remnants."[115]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "When they reached those giants, they displayed the staff of Moses and were saved. How do we know that he gave them that staff? As is written: *Go up* זה (*zeh*), *this way, into the Negeb* (Numbers 13:17). Here is written *Go up zeh, this way*, and there is written המטה הזה ואת (*Ve-et ha-matteh ha-zeh*), *This staff, you shall take in your hand* (Exodus 4:17). By virtue of it, they were saved. You might say, 'These giants—let them be'; but rather, [the giants] came to capture them, and [the scouts] displayed that staff and escaped."[116]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Moses transmitted to them the tradition of a Holy Name, by virtue of which they were saved."[117]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "[The giants] were called by three names: נפילים (*Nephilim*), ענקים (*Anaqim*), רפאים (*Repha'im*); and all of them lived long. Originally they were called *Nephilim*, Fallen Ones. Afterward, when they united with the

daughters of humankind and engendered by them, they were called *Anaqim*, Giants. Later, when they went roaming through this world ומתרפיין (*u-mitrappeyan*), and were slackened, from that which is above, they were called *Repha'im*, Slack Ones."[118]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "But look at what is written: *Rephaim, they, too, are considered* כענקים (*ka-Anaqim*), *as the Giants* (Deuteronomy 2:11)!"[119]

He replied, "So it is, because the *Anaqim* came from both this side and that side, and they despaired greatly on earth. Similarly, the *Repha'im*, who issued from them and lived long lives. As they grew feeble, half their body weakened and half endured. When half their body was dead, they would take a certain herb of the field, throw it into their mouths, and die; and since they wanted to kill themselves, they were called *Repha'im*, Shades of the Dead."[120]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "They cast themselves into the Great Sea and died drowning, as is written: הרפאים (*Ha-repha'im*), *The shades, tremble beneath the waters and their denizens* (Job 26:5)."

Rabbi Shim'on said, "If Israel had entered the Land under the stigma [161a] of the evil tongue, the world would not have endured for a moment. Who is the artisan of the evil tongue? The serpent. Mystery of the matter: As soon as the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with slime."[121]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "The blessed Holy One forgives everything except the evil tongue, for it is written: *By our tongue we will prevail; our own lips are with us—who is master over us?* (Psalms 12:5).[122]

"Come and see how much was inflicted by that evil tongue! It decreed upon our ancestors that they could not enter the Land; those who uttered it died; weeping was decreed for generations upon generations. All the more so here, for they spouted evil speech against all: since they uttered it against the Holy Land, it is as if they uttered it

against Him. Therefore the blessed Holy One became jealous over this—that is, jealous for His Name—and all of Israel would have been annihilated from the world, were it not for the prayer of Moses.”[123]

ויספרו (*Va-ysapperu*), *They recounted, to him and said, “We came to the land you sent us to”* (Numbers 13:27). Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Why is it written differently here: *va-ysapperu, they recounted*, rather than ויגידו (*va-yaggidu*), *they told*, or ויאמרו (*va-yomeru*), *they said*? Well, each one indicates something unique. *Va-yaggidu, They told*, always implies a hint of wisdom, as has already been said. *Va-yomeru, They said*—merely saying. *Va-yomeru, They said*—thoughts of the heart. *Va-yomeru, They said*—a command. This has been established in various places. *Va-ysapperu, They recounted*—explaining the matter, always.[124]

“באנו (*Banu*), *We came, to the land*—the verse should read הלכנו (*halakhnu*), *we went*. However, *banu, we came*—‘we entered there, into that land that you’ve been praising every day and saying that there’s nothing like it *and it is truly flowing with milk and honey* (Numbers 13:27).’”[125]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Whoever wants to tell a lie should first say something true, so that they will believe his lies.”[126]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Rather, they said, ‘You praise it every day, saying that there’s nothing like it *and it is truly flowing with milk and honey*. You elevate its praise above all—and it is not so, for look, *this is its fruit* (Numbers 13:27)!’ They plucked one of its smallest clusters and said, ‘If this is the inheritance that the blessed Holy One is granting to Israel, and for which they suffered all those afflictions and toils, well, surely in the land of Egypt there are clusters and fruit of the land twice as good!’[127]

“*But mighty are the people dwelling in the land* (Numbers 13:28)—‘According to the way of the world, mighty ones who wage battle are stationed outside [the

cities] to guard the roads; but here, even the city dwellers are strong and mighty. *And the cities are fortified and huge…* (ibid.), so that even if all the kings of the world would assemble against them, they wouldn't make a dent."[128]

Rabbi Yose said, "Everything they said was said with the evil tongue. The harshest of all—as is written: *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land* (Numbers 13:29). This may be compared to a person who has been bitten by a snake. When they want to intimidate him, they say, 'Look, there's a snake!'"[129]

Rabbi Abba said, "Surely this was the harshest of everything they said, since it implied: 'The one who wages war against all lies in wait here.' And where? *In the Negeb land*, which is the entryway. Immediately, *the whole community lifted their voice and put it forth*, [*and the people wept on that night*] (Numbers 14:1)—they instituted weeping forever on that night."[130]

Rabbi Yose said, "They conspired to defame all. What is meant by 'all'? The Land and the blessed Holy One."[131]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "The Land, granted; but how do we know about the blessed Holy One?"

He replied, "As implied by what is written: *But mighty are the people*—'Who can withstand them?' *Mighty are the people*, precisely! And it is written: *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land*.[132]

"Thereby they caused all this, as has been said; and the blessed Holy One sought to annihilate them from the world, as is written: *He said that He would annihilate them—had not Moses, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him* (Psalms 106:23)."[133]

Now, please, let YHVH's power be great, as You have spoken,

Rabbi Aḥa and Rabbi Yose said, "Happier is Israel than all nations of the world, for the

saying (Numbers 14:17).[134] blessed Holy One delights in them, is named for them, and glories in them! The world was created only for the sake of Israel, so that they would engage in Torah, for one is linked with the other. And Israel below in this world is its sustenance—and the sustenance of all other nations. When? When they fulfill their Lord's will.[135]

"Come and see: When the blessed Holy One created the human in the world, He designed him according to the supernal precious pattern, and placed his strength and power in the middle of the body, where the heart dwells, which is the potency and nourishment of the whole body. From there, the whole body is sustained, and all members of the body are fed. The heart is firmly connected [161b] to a supernal place above—the brain in the head, dwelling above—and one is linked with the other.[136]

"In a similar way, the blessed Holy One arranged the world. He made it one body, arranging members of the body around the heart, with the heart in the middle. The whole body and all those members are nourished by that heart, which is the power of all, and upon which all depend. The heart is linked and connected with the supernal brain, dwelling above.

"So it was when the blessed Holy One created the world. He arranged the ocean surrounding the whole inhabitable world, and the habitation of all seventy nations surrounding Jerusalem. Jerusalem is situated in the middle of all habitation, and it surrounds the Temple Mount, and the Temple Mount surrounds the courts of the Israelites, and the courts of the Israelites surround the Chamber of Hewn Stone, where the Great Sanhedrin sits—and we have learned: 'No one may sit in the Temple Court except kings of the House of David.' The Chamber of Hewn Stone surrounds the entrance hall and the altar, and the entrance hall and the altar surround the Sanctuary, and the

Sanctuary surrounds the Holy of Holies—where *Shekhinah*, the purging cover, the cherubim, and the Ark are located.[137]

"Here is the heart of the whole world, and from here are nourished all those areas of habitation, which are members of the body. This heart is nourished by the brain in the head, and one is linked with the other, as is written: מכון (*Makhon*), *A firm place, for Your sitting enthroned You fashioned, O YHVH* (Exodus 15:17).[138]

"Similarly above, in precious concealed mystery: supernal Sea, corresponding to this one. There is sea above sea—and an even higher sea.[139]

"Come and see: The River of Fire surrounds many camps, facing seventy aspects engraved by seven blazes; and they surround those ministers within, who in turn surround four Chariots, who in turn surround the Holy City resting upon them.[140]

"It has been taught: There, courts within courts; and no one may sit in the court there except kings of the House of David, who are seated there. The Great Sanhedrin is located there in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, and above them that Court of Justice—serving the place that it serves—from which judgment is delivered to supernal holy ones, until it reaches the place called Holy of Holies, in which all is found. There dwells the heart, nourished by the brain above Her, joined with one another.[141]

"Similarly, high above, in mystery of the supernal King. Consequently, all is nourished by the supernal Brain, concealed of all. When matters are contemplated, all is linked to one another.[142]

"Come and see: When the concealed Ancient One illumines the Brain, the Brain illumines the Heart by way of *the beauty of YHVH* (Psalms 27:4), as we have already established. This is *YHVH's power* (Numbers 14:17)—the power coming from the Holy Ancient One, Concealed of all Concealed.[143]

“*Please let it be great* (ibid.)—that it may grow and increase high above, and be drawn and channeled below.

“*As You have spoken* (ibid.)—as we have established.[144]

“*Saying* (ibid.)—that all later generations may learn from here forever and ever. *Saying*—to say this in time of trouble, to say this in time of comfort. To say what? *YHVH! Slow to anger* [*and abounding in kindness*…] (ibid., 18). We have already established these matters.”[145]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Why did *truth* depart from here?”[146]

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, “They caused it to depart from here, for they conducted themselves in falsehood. With the very measure by which a person measures, it is measured out to him. Similarly, the others departed, for Moses could not utter them—since they were the cause.[147]

“*I have forgiven, according to your word* (Numbers 14:20)—*according to your word*, exactly! This has already been discussed by the Companions.”[148]

RAV METIVTA רב מתיבתא

Head of the Academy

… with one another what they were unable to say previously.[1]

They emerged from that opening and sat in a garden under some trees. They said to one another, “Since we are here and have seen all this, if we die here, we will certainly enter the world that is coming!”[2]

They sat down, and slumber descended upon them and they fell asleep. After a while, the official came [162a] and woke them, saying, “Rise, go out into the orchard outside.”[3]

They went out and saw the Masters of Scripture, who were discussing this verse: “*In this desert they shall come to an end* (Numbers 14:35)—but not in another place. *And there they shall die* (ibid.)—but not in another place. This refers to the bodies, but as for the souls, no—like the denizens of the Garden.”[4]

The official said to them, “Go out.” They went out with him.

He said to them, “Did you hear anything within that level?”

They replied, “We heard a voice saying: ‘Whoever ceases shall cease; whoever shortens shall be shortened; whoever shortens shall be lengthened.’[5]

He said to them, “Do you know what this means?”

They replied, “No.”

He said to them, “Did you see that great eagle and the child gathering herbs? It was Rabbi Ilai of Nisibis, he and his son. He came here; and he and the child, his son, saw

this cave. As soon as they entered into the darkness, they could not bear it—and died.[6]

"That child, his son, stands every day before Bezalel, when he descends from the Academy on High, and recites to him three things, before [Bezalel] begins to soar with concealed mysteries of wisdom—for all his words are concealed mysteries, which *no eye has seen, O God, but You* (Isaiah 64:3).[7]

"Regarding what he said: 'Whoever ceases shall cease'—whoever ceases words of Torah for idle chatter, his life shall cease in this world and his judgment awaits in that world.[8]

"'Whoever shortens shall be shortened'—whoever shortens 'Amen,' rather than extending it calmly, shall have his life shortened in this world.[9]

"'Whoever shortens shall be lengthened'—whoever utters אחד (*eḥad*), *one*, must snatch the א (*alef*), shortening its pronunciation, not lingering on this letter at all; and if one does so, his life shall be lengthened."[10]

They said to him, "He said further, 'They are two, joined by one, making three; and when they are three they are one.'"[11]

He replied, "These are two names in *Shema Yisra'el*: יהוה יהוה (*YHVH, YHVH*). אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God*, joins them, and is the seal of the signet ring: truth. When they merge as one, they are one in single union."[12]

"He said further, 'They are two, turning into one. When He reigns, He flies on the wings of the wind and soars through two hundred thousand and is concealed.'"[13]

He said to them, "These are the two cherubim upon whom the blessed Holy One used to ride; and ever since the day that Joseph was hidden from his brothers, [one] has been hidden away and one remains with Benjamin—as is written: *He rode upon a cherub and flew, soaring on the wings of the wind* (Psalms 18:11).[14]

“He is hidden away in two hundred thousand worlds—the one riding upon it; for those two hundred thousand hidden ones are His, may He be blessed.[15]

“Go out from here. Happy are you!”

They went out. That official gave them another rose, and they left. As they emerged, the mouth of the cave closed, and could not be seen at all.[16]

They saw the eagle descending from the tree, entering another cave. They smelled the rose and entered there; they found that eagle at the mouth of the cave. He said to them, “Enter, O truly virtuous ones, Companions! For since the day I arrived here, I have not seen the joy of companionship except through you.”[17]

They entered. They arrived at another orchard, accompanied by the eagle. When they reached the Masters of Mishnah, that eagle turned into the image of a man—in a splendid garment, radiant like them—and he sat down together with them.[18]

He said to those who were seated, “Render honor to the Masters of Mishnah who have come here, for their Master has shown them great wonders here.”[19]

One of them said, “Do they have an insignia?”

They replied, “Yes.” They took out the two roses and smelled them.[20]

They said, “Be seated, O heads of the Academy! Be seated, O truly virtuous ones!” They grasped them, and they sat down. At that time, they learned there thirty *halakhot* that they did not know before, and other mysteries of Torah.[21]

They returned to the Masters of Scripture, and found them discussing *I Myself said, “You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you”* (Psalms 82:6): *“I Myself said*—when you placed doing before listening—that behold, *you are gods*. But as soon as you drew upon yourselves the evil impulse, *yet indeed like a human you shall die* (ibid., 7)—just as a human’s death brings him down to the dust so that

the evil impulse within him may be obliterated, and it is that evil impulse that dies and is consumed within him."[22] [162b]

The old man presiding over them said, "Here, too, it is written: *Your own corpses will fall in this desert* (Numbers 14:32). What is meant by פגריכם (*pigreikhem*), *your corpses*? This is the evil impulse, including male and female—the deficiencies within you, for the evil impulse always descends to deficiency and does not ascend. In holiness, one progresses and does not regress; in defilement, one always regresses and does not rise. So they are called *pigreikhem, your corpses*—your deficiencies, as is said: *who* פגרו (*piggeru*), *were too weak, to cross the Wadi*… (1 Samuel 30:10).[23]

"The end of the verse proves it, as is written: יפלו (*yippelu*), *they will fall*, and not תפלו (*tippelu*), *you will fall*. So, *in this desert they shall come to an end*—those corpses—*and there they shall die* (Numbers 14:35), for it is the will of the blessed Holy One to eradicate these corpses from the world forever."[24]

That Rabbi Ilai said, "O truly virtuous ones, enter and see, for permission has been granted to you to enter until the place where the curtain is spread. Happy is your share!"

They rose and entered a certain place where there were Masters of *Aggadah*, their faces shining like the radiance of the sun. They said, "Who are these?"[25]

He replied, "These are the Masters of *Aggadah*, and every day they see the radiance of Torah fittingly."

They stood and heard numerous new words of Torah, but they were not permitted to enter among them.[26]

Rabbi Ilai said to them, "Enter another place and see."

They entered another garden and also saw people digging graves and dying immediately and coming back to life in radiant, holy bodies. They said to him, "What is this?"

He replied, "They do this every day; and as soon as they lie in the grave, that evil slime they received at first is

consumed, and they immediately rise in new radiant bodies—in those holy bodies that stood at Mount Sinai. Exactly as you see, so they all stood at Mount Sinai, in bodies without any filth at all. But as soon as they drew upon themselves the evil impulse, they changed into other garments—of previous bodies, strange bodies—as is written: *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb on* (Exodus 33:6)."[27]

A voice was aroused: "Go, assemble—for Oholiab stands at his post, with all those thrones before him!"[28]

At that moment, all of them flew away, and [the Companions] saw nothing; they were left alone beneath the trees of the garden.

They saw another opening; they entered there. They saw a palace; they entered and sat down. Two youths were there. Raising their eyes, they saw a dwelling embroidered with all kinds of designs in all colors of the world, and above it was spread a cover of sparkling light, upon which the eyes were unable to gaze. To a distance of two miles they could see within that dwelling, until the place where the curtain was spread; from there on they saw nothing.[29]

They inclined their ears and heard a voice saying, "Bezalel is fourth of the supernal lights. Joseph is fourth among the lights of Primordial Adam—ascension above, beloved of all. Of him is written *its libation, one-fourth of a* hin *in the sanctuary* (Numbers 28:7).[30]

"Whoever gazes and sees, his eyes will be blinded. Whoever does not gaze, sees and is opened.

"The tree of eighteen—when it bends, it will stand erect and rise; if it does not bend, the evil serpent consumes it.

"Whoever enters two cherubim within, his will is fulfilled. Whoever speculates is far from his wish.

"Offering of a child is perfectly received."[31]

This voice ceased.

Those two youths said, "Do you possess an insignia?"

They replied, “Yes.” They took out those two roses and smelled them.[32]

[The youths] said, “Be seated until you hear two matters of ancient mysteries from the Masters of the Academy—and these must always remain secret within you.”

They replied, “Yes.”

(Rabbi Shim’on said, “All these matters—and all that they saw—they wrote down. And when they reached here, it was written *I said, ‘Let me guard my ways* [*from sinning with my tongue*]’ [Psalms 39:2]. I asked my grandfather, ‘How great were those two utterances?’ He replied, ‘My son, by your life, those two utterances create worlds and destroy them—for one who wields them.’”[33])

Once they heard those two utterances, the youths said, “Go out, go out! You are not permitted to hear any more.”

One of [the youths] took out an apple and gave it to them. He said, “Smell this.”

They smelled it and emerged—and of all that they had seen, they forgot nothing.[34]

When they left, another official came and said to them, “Companions, Rabbi Ilai has sent me to you. Wait for him here at the mouth of the cave, and he will come and inform you of things you do not know; for he has asked from [163a] the Academy that he may be permitted to reveal matters to you.”

They went out with him and waited by the mouth of the cave, going over with one another all that they had seen and learned there.

Meanwhile Rabbi Ilai came, beaming like the sun. They said to him, “Have you heard some new Torah?”

He replied, “Certainly! And I have been given permission to tell you.”[35]

They joined as one at the mouth of the cave and sat down. He said to them, “Happy are you, for your Lord has

shown you the likeness of the world that is coming, and yet you have no fear or trepidation!”

They replied, “Certainly! The way of mortals has been obliterated from our memory, and everything we’ve seen on this mountain is astounding.”[36]

He said to them, “Do you see these mountains? All of them are heads of Academies for this people of the desert, and they have now attained what they never attained when they were alive. On new moons, Sabbaths, and festivals, these heads of Academies gather at the mountain of Aaron the priest and are stimulated by him—entering his Academy, where they are renewed with the purity of holy dew descending upon his head and of the anointing oil flowing upon him. With him they are all renewed with loving rejuvenations of the Holy King, so this is called the Academy of Love.[37]

“[Aaron] proceeds with the entire Academy in ethereal secrecy—gliding like eagles into the Academy of Light, namely the Academy of Moses. All of them stand outside, not entering within—except Aaron alone—and occasionally they are invited by name.[38]

“No one can see Moses, for his facial veil is spread before him, and seven clouds of glory surround him. Aaron stands within the curtain below Moses—the curtain separating and not separating between them—and all the heads of the Academies are outside this draping curtain, and all the rest outside those clouds.[39]

“Corresponding to the renewed radiance of Torah, so those clouds shine, rarefied by a delicateness of light, until that veil is visible. From within the veil they see a light shining more brightly than all lights of the world—and that is the face of Moses. His face is not visible at all; no one sees it—only that radiance issuing from within the veil behind all those clouds.[40]

“Moses utters a statement—unexplained—to Aaron, and Aaron clarifies it to the notables of the Academies. How

does he explain it? By all those springs that were blocked to him when the time of Joshua came; and now he restores them with many wonders, fountains, springs, and streams flowing from every single word.[41]

"Similarly, all the virtuous women of this generation come to Miriam at these times, and then they all ascend like columns of smoke in this desert. That day is called the Day of Celebration. On the eve of Sabbath and the eve of festivals, all the women come to Miriam and know how to delve into discovering the Master of the Universe. Happy is this generation above all generations of the world![42]

"They emerge from the Academy of Moses and fly to the Heavenly Academy, and those who are deserving fly to the Supreme Academy. Of this generation is written *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* (Psalms 144:15)."[43]

Rabbi Ilai opened, saying, "*You shall be* תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted, with YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 18:13). What is the difference between תם (*tam*), and תמים (*tamim*)? Of Abraham is written *Walk in My presence and be tamim, wholehearted* (Genesis 17:1). Of Jacob, who became more complete, is written *Jacob was* איש תם (*ish tam*), *a complete man* (ibid. 25:27), because no refuse remained in him at all, since he included פריעה (*peri'ah*), uncovering.[44]

"How was he 'uncovered' and purified of all that refuse? Well, the place that strengthens the refuse within—the place where 'uncovering' appears—is an ox: image on the left of His Throne. That ox is called שור תם (*shor tam*), an innocent ox, since the Chariot of the Throne has an insignia of the Covenant; so this ox is called *tam*, and Jacob holds it within himself. With this ox, he performs 'uncovering,' eliminating the filth of refuse entirely.[45]

"In the Mishnah of Bezalel is written *God remembered Rachel* (Genesis 30:22). Of Sarah is written פקידה (*peqidah*), attending, whereas of Rachel is written זכירה (*zekhirah*),

remembering. Why? Because זכור (*zakhor*), remember, is inscribed on Jacob, who is complete Covenant when Joseph is formed. How? When he took the ox with him, so that it would not strengthen the Other Side. Therefore Joseph is called *firstling* of the *ox* [163b] that Jacob took—*his firstling ox* (Deuteronomy 33:17), surely![46]

"That ox is *shor tam*, an innocent ox; *and Jacob was ish tam, a complete man* (Genesis 25:27)—master and sovereign, Master of the House, within whom dwells that *shor tam*.[47]

"For there is שור מועד (*shor mu'ad*), a forewarned ox, on the side of foreskin of uncovering. Many wardens of judgment issue from it, until the final rung, called שאיה (*She'iyyah*), Desolation—the one who topples uninhabited houses of the world. All of them emerge from that forewarned ox, when it joins the evil donkey. Consequently, *Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together* (Deuteronomy 22:10), so as not to arouse them.[48]

"In that Academy of Bezalel, as well as in the two Academies: *Jacob was ish tam—husband of* that *tam*, complete one. Who is He? א (*Alef*), mystery of ואו (*vav*); and when they are totality of male and female as one, He takes all these letters: א ת ם (*alef, tav, mem*), which is אמת (*emet*), truth—*You will grant emet, truth, to Jacob* (Micah 7:20)—totality of male and female as one, consummation of all.[49]

"Abraham was not commanded about *peri'ah*, uncovering. When he entered, he entered this תם (*tam*), complete one, and within its rungs, called together ים (*yam*), sea—thus, תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*. Afterward, Abraham ascended, entering within, linking with supernal Right.[50]

"*You shall be* תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted, with YHVH*, surely! Just as He is *tamim, wholehearted*, a single totality, so you should be *tamim, wholehearted*, with Him, surely! How does a person become תמים (*tamim*)—being תם (*tam*), ים (*yam*)? *Tam*, complete, as we have said; *yam*—all its holy rungs are called *yam*, sea, never parting from it. You, too, similarly: removing from yourself alien rungs, linking with *tamim*, so

that you may possess holy rungs, mystery of *yam*, and the holy rung *tam*—to receive א (*alef*), mystery of Jacob. Every day a person must be תם (*tam*), ים (*yam*), corresponding to this pattern precisely.[51]

"Just now in the Academy, an elucidator has explained that this holy moon is beautifully white, with all colors sparkling within Her, embroidered. She has exactly the same fine whiteness as the sun.[52]

"In that sea of Hers, within seventy years, a certain fish emerges, from which is extracted תכלת (*tekhelet*), blue. She takes this dye, prepares it, and covers Herself outwardly with this color.[53]

"Not that this color is Her garment—for after all, *Her garment is linen and purple* (Proverbs 31:22)—but the outer covering is this color. Similarly with the Dwelling, all of which was beautifully embroidered within, and afterward *they shall spread over it a garment of pure tekhelet, blue* (Numbers 4:6). Why? Because beneath this sea are depths of the sea, totality of male and female, and they have an evil eye, gazing. When they gaze, the color תכלא (*tekhela*), blue, confronts their eyes, and their eyes cannot prevail. Within, She is arrayed in all colors, fittingly embroidered, ranging to the four corners of the world.[54]

"Similarly, a person who wears tzitzit becomes תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*—תם (*tam*), complete, by four corners fittingly prepared; ים (*yam*), sea, by that *tekhelet*, blue, of the fish of the sea. When the Evil Side gazes upon this person, it will not be able to harm him with the evil eye. Then he is תם ים (*tam yam*) *with YHVH* his God, in true alignment—She above and he below.[55]

"Then She ascends within supernal rungs. So, too, the person ascends afterward with tefillin within supernal rungs. Thus, *You shall be* תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted, with YHVH your God*—surely, at the same time, in the same moment: She is arrayed above and that person is arrayed below."[56]

Rabbi Ilai said, “All these here are similarly arrayed, so each one is תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted, with YHVH*. Corresponding to this mystery, *In this desert* יתמו (*yittammu*), *they shall become complete* (Numbers 14:35). Now, if you say that when this was spoken it was intended harmfully—certainly so! For they should have each been *tamim, wholehearted, with YHVH* in the Holy Land, the place where *YHVH* dwells—being face-to-face together with Him. But now, each one is *tamim, wholehearted*, in this desert outside, a place far from there—not gazing face-to-face along with Him, being *with YHVH* fittingly. *And there they shall die* (ibid.)—as you saw them doing every day.[57]

“Happy is your share, holy Companions, that you have attained all this! These two caves are enough for you, since you won’t find all this there. For they are within the Academy of Moses, sitting far away. Concerning this, it is written of Moses: *more humble than any* [164a] *person* (Numbers 12:3)—the supreme prophet has welcomed them to his Academy.”[58]

From the day they began to see all this until that moment—seven days. And in fact, they did not consider this world at all.[59]

Rabbi Ilai said to them, “O holy, virtuous ones, I will tell you the things you heard. As for the first one—when you know the measure of the span of the engraved Explicit Name, you will know that ‘Bezalel is fourth of the supernal lights,’ as is written: *I have filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge* (Exodus 31:3).[60]

“‘Whoever does not gaze, sees and is opened.’ Whoever does not gaze at those three concealed things—what is above, what is below, etc.—is destined to be opened by Torah and to open his eyes through her.[61]

“‘The tree of eighteen’—a person’s spine—‘when it bends’ before its Lord, ‘it will stand erect and arise’ at the

revival of the dead. ‘If it does not bend’ at *Modim*, it becomes ‘a serpent’ and will not be resurrected at that time.[62]

“‘Whoever enters two cherubim’—whoever enters a distance of two doors within the synagogue cleaves to his Lord and ‘his will is fulfilled.’[63]

“‘Whoever speculates’ upon his prayer and considers it ‘is far from his wish’ that he sought.[64]

“Offering of a child’—when a person brings his son to school or to be circumcised, this offering ‘is perfectly received.’[65]

“From here on, beloved ones, be on your way!”

“El’azar, my son, you have spoken well, according to what you have learned—but, Heaven forbid! Even though at that time Rachel was עיקרא (*iqqara*), the essence, Jacob was wise. If he hadn’t known that Leah was his wife, he wouldn’t have buried her in the cave, to join with him in a single bond; he would have buried her outside the Land. But Leah he brought into the Land, whereas Rachel he placed outside.[66]

“When Jacob died, he was buried within [the cave], in a single bond—just like all the other patriarchs and Adam. Eve died first and was buried there, and there Adam knew that this place was intended for him. When Adam died, he was buried within it, in a single bond. When Sarah died, she was buried there—and Eve saw her and was delighted, and she rose to welcome her.[67]

“When Abraham died, he was buried with her in a single bond. When Rebekah died, she was buried there; and Sarah saw and rose to welcome her. When Isaac died, he was buried with her in a single bond. When Leah died, she was buried there; and Rebekah saw and rose to welcome her. When Jacob died, he was buried with her in a single bond. All of them—male and female as one, in a single bond.[68]

“As for their arrangement, how do they lie? Women alongside women, men alongside men. Adam first, Eve next

to him, Sarah alongside Eve, Abraham next to Sarah, Isaac next to Abraham, Rebekah next to Isaac, Leah next to Rebekah, Jacob next to Leah. So, Adam on this side and Jacob on the other; one the beginning, the other the end.[69]

"In the Book of King Solomon it is fitting—and so it is: Adam and Eve first, Abraham and Sarah next to them, Isaac and Rebekah in the other corner directly across in a straight line, Jacob and Leah in the middle. They are women alongside women, men alongside men: Adam and Eve, Sarah and Abraham, Jacob and Leah, Rebekah and Isaac. Adam on this side and Isaac on that side, with Jacob in the middle. For Isaac to be alongside his father is not customary. Nevertheless, Jacob must be in the middle.[70]

"Regarding all these couples, as they were buried, so they will arise and so they will be. Leah will delight with Messiah, son of David, issuing from her, within. Rachel will delight with Messiah, son of Joseph, issuing from her, outside of Jerusalem. All in their places."[71]

"… all of pearls and precious stones.[72]

"Among all those towers, there is one tower in the middle. This one rises to the height of heaven and is not visible now, until the time when it will be revealed. The Head of the Academy saw it, and engraved on it above was this verse: *The name of YHVH is a tower of strength; the righteous one runs into it and is secure* (Proverbs 18:10). The Head of the Academy explained this verse. *The name of YHVH*—Assembly of Israel. [164b] *The righteous one* ירוץ (*yaruts*), *runs, into it*—רעותיה (*re'uteih*), the desire of, *the righteous one* is always for it. Therefore, *it is secure*—that *tower*, so that it will never fall, as it did.[73]

"Rabbi Kruspedai, desired by the heart, explained this verse before he passed away, explaining it well. *A tower of strength:* the תיבה (*teivah*), pulpit, and the Torah scroll, which is *strength*, to be placed on it and taken out of the היכל (*heikhal*), ark—image of the inner *heikhal*, from which emerges

Torah. That *tower* is *the name of YHVH* and His image, and it must have six steps.[74]

"*The righteous one runs into it*. Into what: into the tower or in the Torah scroll? Well, he expounded the verse both ways. When he interpreted it as 'into the tower,' then this *righteous one* must be the *ḥazzan* of the synagogue—truly righteous, image of the supernal Righteous One. When he interpreted it as referring to the Torah scroll, the one reading must be *righteous*, and is called *righteous*.[75]

"Of all of them, who is called *righteous*? The sixth one ascending among those seven."[76]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Surely, for all his life he ascended only sixth among those ascending. *The righteous one runs in it*—in the Torah scroll run the words of this *righteous one*.[77]

"*And is secure*—from what? From fear of the Angel of Death, for he lived a long life. *And is secure*—never to be harmed."[78]

"In the tower rising among those towers stands a radiance in the image of a Torah scroll. When a bird comes, it takes that tower from its place and sets it in the middle of the courtyard beneath the wings of the cherubim. Whereas its height had reached the loft of the heavens, it now descends, entering beneath those wings, its walls between the heads of the cherubim.[79]

"Three hundred openings there. In the middle opening stands this radiance—image of a Torah scroll, in which the king of Israel is destined to read the portion הקהל (*Haqhel*), Assemble. This will be King Messiah and no other, and in that Torah scroll of radiance.[80]

"O holy, pious one! Happy is the one who will hear from his mouth the lovely sound of his words, of those hidden matters of Torah that he explains. On every new moon, Sabbath, festival, and holiday—when all those members of the Academies wish to ascend on high to the Heavenly Academy—they all gather around King Messiah, and he

explains matters; and through the sweetness of his words they ascend, yearning. All those ten matters—among the matters that he explains—are treasured away for you, for the day that you have questions.[81]

"When that tower stands in the middle of the courtyard and this aperture opens, those cherubim open their mouths and spread their wings. A supernal radiance illumines that opening, and that Torah scroll is open, and those cherubim open, saying, *How abundant Your goodness that You have hidden for those who revere You, that You have wrought for those who shelter in You before the eyes of humankind!* (Psalms 31:20). Then openings close, and the Torah scroll is rolled up.[82]

"Who has seen the brilliant radiance of that Torah scroll, all luminous light? Its letters, flames of fire in four colors of the supernal world, all protruding and sparkling. No one can endure them except the Messiah.[83]

"This opening closes, the cherubim subside, and that tower flies, taking its place among the rest of the towers.[84]

"In that middle opening is a crown of pure gold—splendid, precious, hidden, invisible now; inlaid and embedded with all kinds of gems—destined to be placed upon the head of King Messiah when he ascends that tower. Two eagles, one on either side, grasp it in their talons.

"When King Messiah will ascend, the eagles will ready themselves, taking this crown. At the moment he begins to read, another aperture will open, from which will emerge the dove sent by Noah in the days of the Flood, as is written: *He sent out the dove* (Genesis 8:8)—the renowned one, which the ancient ones did not mention and whose identity they did not know; but from here she went forth and fulfilled her mission.[85]

"During the time of which is written *and she did not return to him again* (ibid., 12), no one knew where she had gone—but she returned to her place and was hidden away in this opening. And she will take the crown in her mouth

and place it upon the head of King Messiah, touching yet not touching. Of then is written *You will set on his head a crown of pure gold* (Psalms 21:4).[86]

"As soon as King Messiah reads in the Torah scroll, the two eagles will rise, one on either side, the dove lowering herself. King Messiah descends with the crown on his head to the last level, and the two eagles fly above his head. The dove returns [165a] with the crown in her mouth, those two eagles welcoming her.[87]

"King David is called *a verdant olive tree* in the presence of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *I am like a verdant olive tree in the house of God*… (Psalms 52:10). *A verdant olive tree* is King Messiah, son of David, and that is what this dove intimated in the days of Noah, as is written: *And, look, a plucked olive leaf was* בפיה (*be-fiha*), *in her mouth* (Genesis 8:11). She plucked and snatched that *olive leaf* for his glory. How? *Be-fiha, With her mouth*. For it rests on his head, and he receives glory from this dove.[88]

"Why is it written טרף (*taraf*), *he plucked*, rather than טרפה (*tarefah*), *she plucked*? Well, like a male acting valiantly and prevailing. In the Heavenly Academy, it is taught: 'יונה (*Yonah*), a dove, is masculine. Yet since it is called *yonah*, it is sometimes written as feminine and sometimes as masculine —as when it receives this glory.'[89]

"When this tower returns to its place, it shines like the radiance of the eye of the sun, as is written: *His throne like the sun before Me* (Psalms 89:37)—although he will have another throne, with great miracles and wonders.[90]

"At the top of this tower are birds of fire, who chirp as morning rises—a lovely chirping, whose loveliness is unmatched by any melody. Above them all, other species and turtledoves flying in the air, ascending and descending, descending and ascending, never settling down. Small letters and great letters fly among them.[91]

"O holy, pious one! When the letters fly, a person sees written in great letters in the air momentarily: ואת הארץ

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים (*Be-reshit bara Elohim et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Genesis 1:1). Small letters strike them and they fly, and there is seen written in them: היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום והארץ... (*Ve-ha-arets hayetah tohu va-vohu ve-ḥoshekh al penei tehom*...), *The earth was waste and empty, with darkness over the abyss*... (ibid., 2). Small letters return and strike them, and there is seen written in them: ויאמר אלהים יהי רקיע (*Va-yomer Elohim yehi raqi'a*...), *God said, 'Let there be a firmament...'* (ibid., 6). And so, all the acts of Creation—great marvels and delight to the eyes, the acts of these letters. Happy the people who await all this![92]

"O holy, pious one! Whoever preserves the covenant places himself behind Him, while He is in front. Now, you might ask, 'Who protects him from behind?' Well, the greatest and highest protection guards him. Who is that? Supreme Righteous One, with abounding love. So he enters between Righteous One and Righteousness, and is thus protected on all sides.[93]

"Happy is one who preserves this covenant! Therefore all males of Israel who preserve the sign of this covenant appear before the Holy King. Who can possibly harm a son who is in the middle—his father on one side, his mother on the other, with him between them? That is, when he is *after YHVH* (Deuteronomy 13:5).[94]

"Come and see: When that heaven revolves in rotation, it renders a melody; and due to the roaring sound of gushing waters, that melody is not known. All those basins on the four sides are filled by the flow of gushing waters.[95]

"Whoever is within, exists there in two aspects. One, in joy, unmatched by any joy in the world, to fulfill *Serve YHVH in joy* (Psalms 100:2). And the other, in awe, unmatched by any awe in the world, to fulfill *Serve YHVH in awe* (ibid. 2:11).[96]

“One spring of water bubbling from the east side—the one mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel. Concerning this spring, all the inhabitants of the world cannot complete its praise. In the place where it is born, on the east side, its depth and height is no more than a span.[97]

“When waters flow and rise, all kinds of gems rise—in one color, momentarily. These fall; and look, others rise, in another color—in all kinds of colors in the world! Those gems fall, but do not fall outside.

“Surrounding that flow are calyx and blossom, all around; and no one can comprehend those colors—all flashing flames, impossible to gaze upon.[98]

“The significance of the fashioning is unknown. Their leaves sparkle in many colors—the design and artistry of the Master of the Universe. They cover 375 cherubim below them, after other latticework inside, and those lattices are all around the courtyard inside.[99]

“Above are those [165b] spreading grapevines; below the vines, those cherubim—all their wings spread, intertwined. Here, the Head of the Academy said that whoever gazes upon these grapevines, his face shines like the radiance of the sun.

“Those lattices, ranged around the courtyard, are all embroidered with filaments gleaming in many colors, glistening with four kinds of fiery lights. Flames rise and colors sparkle; sometimes flames subside and colors and lights rise, striking one another.

“Six thousand basins alongside those lattices, four colors on four sides of the courtyard. These are large, with a gush of living waters on every side tumbling into those basins, swallowed up right there. It is not known where these waters are flowing to.

“In the middle of the courtyard, all of Israel will stand and appear in the presence of the Holy King.[100]

“On the south side of this courtyard, one spring of water is born, and it seems that the waters will flood the

whole world. Whoever enters them—[the waters] become knee-deep. If a mighty man enters them, he will enter to his knees; if a day-old baby, [the waters] reach to his knees. Whoever drinks from them becomes wise, enlightened by wisdom.[101]

"This spring issues from one small gem in the southern wall. Those waters are swallowed up in their place, and from there they flow out of the Temple until they enter the Wadi of Shittim, and they will wash away that depravity generated by waters of Shittim.[102]

"Therefore these waters are in the courtyard, for the sake of those who appear there: the males. Once they drank from the waters, they were not aroused toward the females as they came to appear before the Holy King. Furthermore, they will be stimulated to discover concealed matters of the supernal King. Within this Temple, all thoughts will be forgotten except for joyous thoughts of the Holy King.[103]

"One branch emerges in the middle of that spring. The Head of the Academy said, 'When I approached that branch within the spring, the branch rose higher and higher. The closer I came, the higher it rose.'

"The base and root of that branch is solely in water. That branch covers worlds, all colors of the world in its leaves. Its fruit is unknown and unknowable. He said that he asked the Messiah about that fruit, and he replied, 'This fruit is hidden away for *each one with staff in hand because of his great age* (Zechariah 8:4). Whoever is worthy of knowing this will know.'[104]

"There is one heaven over that branch, spread above. That heaven drops dew upon this spring, nothing more. When a person gazes at this heaven from afar, it appears blue. As he comes closer, it appears red; as he comes closer, it appears green; as he comes closer, it appears white, unmatched by any white in the world.[105]

"The dew flowing from it is absorbed by that branch, generating this fruit, which grows. That heaven revolves

faster than eyes can perceive.[106]

“All those who preserve the holy covenant must appear before the King, for surely they appear solely to demonstrate that they are members of the holy circumcision. Of this is written *All* זכורך (*zekhurekha*), *your maleness, shall appear* (Exodus 23:17)—those members of the holy covenant. The Head of the Academy analyzed precisely: זכורך (*zekhurekha*) and not זכרך (*zekharekha*). For surely it is [usually] written זכר (*zakhar*) and not זכור (*zakhur*); why זכורך (*zekhurekha*)? Well, all those who preserve the holy covenant—not sinning with it—are sons of the King, who every day glories in them ודכיר (*ve-dakheir*), and remembers, them constantly. So, *zekhurekha, your males*—the ones who possess the holy covenant, who are remembered by the King every day. For the only praise before the supernal King is for one who preserves this covenant.[107]

“Therefore they must appear three times a year in His presence. Why three times? Well, for the sake of the first patriarchs, who first accepted this covenant; thus, three times a year. Abraham accepted the covenant; Isaac accepted the covenant; Jacob was most complete of all, so of him is written *Jacob was* תם איש (*ish tam*), *a complete man* (Genesis 25:27)—most complete.[108]

“Abraham was called תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted* (ibid. 17:1), yet he was not so complete; but *tam*, most *complete* of all. What is written of Noah? *Noah was a righteous man; he was tamim, wholehearted, in his generation* (ibid. 6:9), for he was inscribed with the holy insignia among them. The Head of the Academy said, ‘Wherever it is written *tamim*, this implies that he is inscribed with the holy insignia, with the sign of the covenant. Since [166a] he preserved this covenant, he was called *tamim in his generation*—whereas all the others were not so, since they corrupted their ways.[109]

“Consequently it is written: *Noah walked with God* (Genesis 6:9). Now, who can walk with Him? Well, when

anyone preserves the holy covenant, *Shekhinah* couples with him and settles upon him. Thus, *You shall be tamim, wholehearted, with YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 18:13)—*you shall be tamim*, and then *with YHVH*, in single coupling. For since he preserves this covenant, he will be *with YHVH*, inseparable from Him.[110]

"Of Abraham is written *Walk before Me and be tamim, wholehearted* (Genesis 17:1)—the covenantal sign of circumcision.[111]

"*Walk before Me*—from here we learn that a man should not walk behind a woman but rather in front of her, which is the proper way. Yet it is written: *Here, I am sending an angel before you* (Exodus 23:20); *I will send an angel before you* (ibid. 33:2)![112]

"Abraham, who was not yet circumcised, was pushed in front; so it is not written *Be tamim and walk before Me*, but rather *Walk before Me*—for you are not worthy until you become *tamim*. Similarly with all of them: once a person is *tamim* and preserves it, immediately She is in front and he is behind—he is worthy of this. Regarding deficiency, what is written? *For he has turned from behind Me* (1 Samuel 15:11).[113]

"Noah was circumcised and *tamim, wholehearted*; yet he did not include *peri'ah*, uncovering. Since he did not, what is written? [*Noah walked*] *with God*—not *behind God*. He was not in front, because he was circumcised; he was not behind, because he was not 'uncovered.' So how was he? *With God*—next to Him; yet he could not gaze upon Him since he was not that worthy.[114]

"Of Israel is written *YHVH was going before them by day in a column of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a column of fire…* (Exodus 13:21). As soon as Israel said *Is it for lack of graves* [*in Egypt that you took us to die in the desert*?…] *For it is better for us to serve Egypt* (ibid. 14:11–12), the Mind weakened, as it were. So it is written

The angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them (ibid., 19).[115]

"*The angel moved*—to wreak vengeance upon them."[116]

... Over this the Messiah rejoiced, and the Head of the Academy, too, who was gladdened by this. The Head of the Academy said that he analyzed precisely for the Messiah, "How did Daniel know, when he said, פרֵס (*Pereis*)—*your kingdom* פריסת (*perisat*), *has been divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians* (Daniel 5:28)? He inferred this from those letters of ופרסין (*u-pharsin*) (ibid., 25). But here, what does this mean?"[117]

[The Messiah] replied, "Certainly so! *Pereis*—the kingdom *perisat*, *has been divided*, by another Messiah; and afterward the king of פרס (*paras*), Persia, will reign, seizing many kingdoms, and he will rule the Holy Land for twelve months. He will rule and kill many, including that Messiah; and afterward he will fall, *and the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom* (Daniel 7:18). Thus, *u-pharsin* implies here 'the king of *paras*, Persia.'"[118]

"O holy, pious one! How much joy upon joy in that spring, nurturing all kinds of trees planted by the blessed Holy One in the Garden of Eden. All of them stand ready for healing—leaves, fruit, and branches—and to delight the heart constantly. They never yield hunger, worry, or sighing. Happy is the people for whom all this is treasured away!"[119]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Does the ground of that Temple have any of these wonders?"

He replied, "O Rabbi! O Rabbi! Happy is your share that all this... in that.... Upon this spring is a heaven, but no one can gaze upon it. Sometimes its light is bright, sometimes dark, sometimes the color purple—sparkling so eyes cannot look up. Regarding what you have asked about that ground of the Temple, the Head of the Academy did not elucidate it, for it is hidden away in the Jordan. I have said to you what I

have said; but we will ask about this matter, and you will know what you will know.[120]

"This Jordan enters and flows once a year into the river that issues from Eden—not into those four rivers deriving from it, but directly into it. As soon as it reaches it, it is drawn and spreads and enters the Jordan. When it reaches the ground of the Temple, it subsides there for three days, not spreading or flowing anywhere else.[121]

"And the Head of the Academy said that when that river returns to its place, it deposits there all kinds of designs fashioned by the blessed Holy One in the Garden of Eden among the designs beneath.[122]

"… to their places, some here and some there, ascending and descending as at first.[123]

"On that southern side are 350 pillars of all kinds of gems—the ones revolving constantly, dripping hidden spices, never revealed. Four basins are inserted in every [166b] single pillar, and when those spices drip from the pillars, they fall into them, filling all those basins with no spices overflowing.[124]

"From those spices, in the time to come, incense is destined to be offered before the Holy King—not from human pounding. The essence of those spices and their ingredients are not known; they simply fall there from those pillars.

"Two eagles on every single pillar—sparkling, flashing in all colors—seven hundred eagles in all. Flying—some here, some there—as the pillars revolve. As they rotate, eyes cannot see their location.[125]

"Three letters protrude and fly from one mouth to the other as the pillars and eagles revolve. All those letters are embroidered in white and green-gold fire.[126]

"Twenty-one hundred candelabra hang between those pillars, with twenty-one hundred lamps in each candelabrum. They burn during the day, and at night are

extinguished for the suffering of Israel. When morning comes, they all light up spontaneously."[127]

As they were sitting and discussing this, night dusked. They said to Rabbi Shim'on, "O holy, pious one, radiance of the world! Take this archival tablet, and take a lamp, and write these words; for the time has come for each of us to visit his grave—until midnight, when the blessed Holy One enters the Garden to delight with the righteous, and then each one flies there. Tomorrow we will be with you, for permission has been granted us to complete the gift being sent to you."[128]

They flew away. Rabbi Shim'on cried and wailed.

He opened, saying, *"A loving doe, a graceful gazelle—let her breasts ever quench your thirst; lose yourself always in her love* (Proverbs 5:19). O Torah, Torah, radiance of all worlds! How many seas, rivers, springs, and fountains spread from you in all directions! From you comes all; upon you depend those above and those below. Supernal radiance surely emanates from you. O Torah, Torah, what shall I say of you? You are *a loving doe, a graceful gazelle* for above and below. Among your lovers, who will be worthy of suckling from you fittingly? O Torah, Torah, delight of your Lord! Who can reveal and utter your secrets and hidden treasures?"[129]

He wept, and placed his head between his knees, and kissed the dust.[130]

Just then, he saw many images of the Companions surrounding him. They said to him, "Do not fear, son of Yoḥai! Do not fear, Holy Lamp! Write, and rejoice in the joy of your Lord."[131]

All that night, he wrote those words he had heard—studying them, poring over them, and he didn't forget a word. That lamp shone before him all through the night until morning came.[132]

When morning arrived, he raised his eyes and saw a radiance beaming in the sky. He lowered his eyes. Once again, he saw the radiance in the whole sky, shining and rising; and in that radiance was the image of a house in many designs. Rabbi Shim'on rejoiced, and instantly that light was hidden away.[133]

Soon, those two messengers came, and found him with his head between his knees. They said to him, "Peace be upon you, O lord! Peace be upon the one whom those above and below wish to greet! Arise!"[134]

Rabbi Shim'on rose and rejoiced with them.

They said to him, "Have you not seen the gratification that your Lord has produced for you? Have you seen the radiance of the house in the sky?"

He replied, "I have seen."

They said to him, "At that moment, the abyss brought forth the Temple, and the blessed Holy One conveyed it through the Great Sea, and some of its radiance shone in the sky."

They said to him, "The Head of the Academy sends you greetings, knowing that we are emissaries to you. Many new-ancient words were innovated in Torah this night."[135]

He said to them, "I beg of you, say one of those words!"

They replied, "We have not been granted permission except for that for which we came to you—but we have one utterance for you now. For the Head [of the Academy] opened, saying, *'YHVH said to Abram, "Go you forth from your land…"* (Genesis 12:1)—in order to illumine a radiance within him. Similarly, if a person does not succeed in one place, let him go and move himself to another place, and there he will succeed. If wood is lit—yet no light rises, illumining it—let them shake it, and light will rise, flashing.'[136]

"We were ready to hear more; but for the sake of coming to you, [167a] we didn't want to linger."[137]

Rabbi Shim'on rejoiced.

They said to him, “O holy, pious one! All the words of Torah within us are small matters, every single one—and those small matters, how great and sublime they are, so as to be immeasurable! For within us there is no doubt, but rather lucidity of Torah clearly settled.[138]

“Right now, the Head of the Academy is explaining concealed matters relating to this; for the essence of the soul—why doesn’t it shine in one place, whereas it succeeds in being illumined in another place? Until now, we have not attained this, for the sake of coming to you.[139]

“But another matter we did succeed in hearing from him. A spirit that moves naked in that world, childless—his wife becomes a vessel, so that he may be built. Why? His wife is a lamp, kindled by him, and both of them are a single lamp—this light issuing from that light. If this one is extinguished, it is kindled by its very light, since they are a single light.[140]

“Now, Rabbi, let us return to previous matters. When we return to our place, we will obtain permission from the Head of the Academy concerning the words that we receive from him, and we will tell them to you. Happy is your share, for you are entitled to concealed lights from all directions—from above and from below, from this world and from the other world!”[141]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “One thing I wish to know, if you can inform me. Women in that world—are they privileged to ascend on high, or what is their status there?”

They replied, “O Rabbi! O Rabbi! Concerning this we have an extremely deep secret—so as not to reveal the mysteries there. But this one will go and obtain permission, and we will tell you.”[142]

Just then, one flew away and disappeared. A moment later, he returned to them. He said, “I was about to enter—and they were all in one wreath, trying the case of one person who was standing at the entrance to the Garden; and those cherubim were clutching him, not letting him

come in; and he was in pain between them, crying out at the entrance, and all the righteous ones there heard. Now all the members of the Academies are gathering to enter the presence of King Messiah to examine his case—and I came to inform you, and this colleague of mine must go there, since a proclamation has passed among all those members of the Academies that they should assemble now before the Messiah."[143]

He took a memorandum and gave it to Rabbi Shim'on, saying, "Take this and examine what's there until we come back to you."

Both of them flew away. Rabbi Shim'on took the memorandum and saw what he saw of the secrets there that whole day. At night, he saw a lamp; slumber overcame him and he slept until morning. When daylight shone, the memorandum rose and flew away from him.

Just then, those two arrived. They said to him, "Rise, O Rabbi! Happy is your share! Rise! On account of you, we saw and attained many sublime secrets. How much joy was shown to us when they granted us permission to reveal to you all that you desire! The Head of the Supreme Academy came out to us and said, 'Give greetings to the son of Yoḥai. The son of Yoḥai's place has been cleared already for several days; no one can approach it. Happy is he!'[144]

"O Rabbi! O Rabbi! When we flew away from you, we entered and saw all the members of the Academies gathering within a certain palace where the Messiah was present, and they were trying the case of that person who was standing at the entrance. His name we are not permitted to reveal."[145]

Rabbi Shim'on was saddened by this. They said to him, "O Rabbi! Do not feel sad about this; you will know tonight in your dream. But they tried his case, and the Messiah decreed that this person shall remain outside suffering for forty days. At the end of forty days, he will be tormented with the suffering of Hell for an hour-and-a-half.[146]

“All this because one day, one of the Companions was explaining words of Torah; and when he reached a certain item, this person knew that he would stumble over it, and he told the Companions, ‘Be quiet, don’t say anything!’ Because the Companions kept quiet, he stumbled over that item and felt ashamed. And on account of the shame caused by this person, he is being punished with this harsh sentence, [167b] for the blessed Holy One does not wish to waive a sin of Torah, even to a hairbreadth.[147]

“They passed judgment on him, and all the members of the Academies left; and I asked permission, for the son of Yoḥai had asked this question—and therefore they showed me what I hadn’t known previously.[148]

“O Rabbi! Six palaces they showed me, with countless delights and pleasures, and the place where the curtain is spread in the Garden, for from that curtain and beyond, no males can enter at all.[149]

“In one palace is Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh, accompanied by many myriads and thousands of virtuous women, and every single one of them has places of light and delight, without any crowding at all. Three times a day, heralds proclaim: ‘Here comes the image of Moses the Faithful!’ Bithiah comes out to a certain screen she has—and sees the image of Moses and bows toward him, saying, ‘Happy is my share, that I raised this radiance!’ This is her delight, greater than all.[150]

“She returns to the women, and they engage in commandments of Torah—all of them in the images they assumed in this world, in a garment of light like the garment of the males, except not shining the same. Commandments of Torah that they were not privileged to fulfill in this world—they delve into them and their reasons in that world. All these women who dwell with Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh, are called *carefree women* (Isaiah 32:9), for they do not suffer the torments of Hell at all.[151]

“In another palace is Serah, daughter of Asher, accompanied by many women—a myriad and thousands. Three times a day, it is proclaimed before her: ‘Here comes the image of Joseph the Righteous!’ She rejoices and comes out to a certain screen she has—and sees the radiant image of Joseph, and rejoices and bows toward him, saying, ‘Happy is the day that I announced the good news about you to my grandfather!’[152]

“Afterward, she returns to the other women, and they engage in praises of the Master of the Universe, glorifying His name. How many places, how much joy has every single one of them! Afterward, they return to delve into commandments of Torah and their reasons.

“In another palace is Jochebed, mother of Moses, the Faithful Prophet, accompanied by many thousands and myriads. In this palace there are no proclamations at all, but rather three times every single day she praises and glorifies the Master of the Universe—she and all those women with her. They sing the Song at the Sea every day, and she alone chants starting from here: *Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a timbrel in her hand…* (Exodus 15:20–21). All the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to her lovely voice, and many holy angels join her in praising and glorifying the Holy Name.[153]

“In the sixth palace—Deborah, similarly, accompanied by all the other women, praising and singing that song she chanted in this world. O Rabbi! O Rabbi! Who has seen the joy of the righteous men and of the virtuous women, serving the blessed Holy One?[154]

“Deep within those palaces are four palaces of the holy matriarchs, which cannot be revealed and which no one has seen.[155]

“Every single day, as I have told you, [the women] are by themselves, and the men similarly. Every night they all mingle as one, as has been said, for the time of coupling is at midnight, whether in this world or in that world.

Coupling of that world is cleaving of soul to soul, light to light; coupling of this world is body to body—all fittingly.[156]

"The palaces of the four matriarchs are called Palaces of Confident Daughters. Happy is the share of the righteous, male and female, who follow the straight path in this world and attain all those delights in that world—which we were not privileged to see![157]

"O Rabbi! O Rabbi! If you were not the son of Yoḥai, it could not be revealed. Coupling in that world generates fruit [168a] greater than the fruit generated by coupling in this world. In coupling in that world—by their desire as one, as souls cleave to one another—they generate fruit, and lights emanate from them, becoming lamps. Those are souls for proselytes who convert, and all these enter a certain palace.[158]

"When a proselyte converts, a soul flies from that palace and enters beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*. She kisses her, since she is the fruit of the righteous; and She sends her into that convert, within whom she dwells. From that time on, he is called גר צדק (*ger tsedeq*), convert of righteousness. This accords with the mystery that is written: *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life* (Proverbs 11:30)—just as the Tree of Life yields souls, so, too, the fruit of a righteous person yields souls.[159]

"The Head of the Academy said, 'It is written: *Sarai was barren, she had no child* (Genesis 11:30). Since it says *Sarai was barren*, don't I know that *she had no child*? Why *she had no child*? Well, *a child* she did not bear, but souls she did! By the passionate cleaving of those two virtuous ones, they generated souls for converts during the whole time that they were in Haran, as do the righteous in the Garden of Eden, as is written: *and the souls they had made in Haran* (Genesis 12:5)—they made *souls*, literally!"[160]

Rabbi Shim'on rejoiced.

That man said to him, "O Rabbi! O Rabbi! What shall I say to you? Every new moon, Sabbath, festival, and holiday,

those males ascend to appear before the Holy King—males and not females, as is said: *All your males shall appear* (Exodus 23:17). And when they return, they return with many new words, which they repeat before the Head of the Academy.[161]

"This day they repeated before him new words about ancient mysteries: A righteous one who prospers, a righteous one who suffers, etc. They all mount the scale of the Tree before coming into the world, and according to the balance of the scale, so is their fate in this world.[162]

"The Head of the Academy descended and revealed some of what he had heard above, disclosing one matter and no more: Wood whose light does not ascend—let them strike it, and it will flash. A body in which the light of the soul does not ascend—let them strike it, and the radiance of the soul will ascend; they will unite with one another, shining.

"For there may be a body in which the radiance of the soul does not shine until it is struck. Then the radiance of the soul shines, and she is united with the body—and the body, with her. Then the body raises radiance from within the soul—glorifying, exalting, and praising; offering prayers and supplications; blessing its Lord. Behold, then all shines!

"For there may be a body in which the soul cannot shine until it is struck; then she shines, and they unite with one another. There may be wood that is not seized by light, no light arising within it, until it is struck; then it flashes.[163]

"The Other Side seeks to do the same, striking the wicked; yet as much as he strikes, *the lamp of the wicked is extinguished* (Proverbs 13:9)—[the wicked one] reviles and curses on every side and cannot shine at all. Then it is written: *For what man is there who can follow the king?* (Ecclesiastes 2:12)—he seeks to imitate Him but cannot. Thus, *YHVH tests the righteous* (Psalms 11:5)—striking him; and then he shines, strengthened by the light. *Tests*—as is said: *a tested stone* (Isaiah 28:16)."[164]

Rabbi Shim’on bent down and kissed the dust. He said, “O word! O word! You I have pursued since the day I came into existence, and now the matter is revealed to me from the root and source of all!”[165]

He said to him, “O Rabbi! O Rabbi! When all those spirits—male and female—ascend on high, at that time they hear new and ancient words. They descend and enter the Academy, and repeat the words before the Head of the Academy, and he teaches them each word firmly. When they ascend, they strip themselves of their garments and ascend; when they descend, they clothe themselves in the garments of that body.[166]

“O Rabbi! O Rabbi! How joyously new are words from the Head of the Academy! Happy is one who diminishes himself in this world! How great and lofty he is in that world! This is how the Head of the Academy opened: One who is small is great; one who is great is small—as is written: [168b] *Sarah’s life was one hundred* שנה (*shanah*), *years, and twenty* *shanah, years, and seven* שנים (*shanim*), *years* (Genesis 23:1). *One hundred*, which is a great number, is written alongside *shanah, year*—reduced to the minimum of years: one. *Seven*, which is small, is increased, as is written: *seven* *shanim, years*. The blessed Holy One increases only the small; He diminishes only the great. Happy is one who belittles himself in this world! How great he is there, lofty in elevation!”[167]

Just then, they heard the Song at the Sea in a sweet voice—since the day they were created, they had never heard a voice singing as sweetly. When it concluded, chanting *YHVH shall reign forever and ever* (Exodus 15:18), they saw four figures in the heaven, one of them greater and loftier than all. A voice was aroused: *Thus says YHVH: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the desert in a land unsown* (Jeremiah 2:2).

That greatest and loftiest of them soared through the sky and was concealed.[168]

Another one rose after him and said, *I will lead the blind by a road they do not know; by paths they do not know I will conduct them. I will turn darkness before them into light, rough ground into a plain. These are the words—I will fulfill them and not abandon them* (Isaiah 42:16). Concluding, he soared through the sky and was concealed.

Another opened, saying, *The arid desert shall be glad, the wilderness shall rejoice and shall blossom like a rose* (Isaiah 35:1). He soared through the sky and was concealed.

Another opened, saying, *Thus says YHVH—who creates you, O Jacob; who forms you, O Israel: Fear not, for I will redeem you; I have called you by name, you are mine* (Isaiah 43:1). *Thus says YHVH, who makes a way through the sea, a path through mighty waters. I am about to do something new; now it will flourish, you will perceive it: I will make a road through the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field will honor Me—jackals and ostriches—for I provide water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen* (ibid., 16, 19–20). Concluding, he soared through the sky and was concealed.

Then great fear and trepidation fell upon them. When daylight shone, a voice was aroused: “O nation mighty as a lion, powerful as tigers, render honor to your Lord! *Therefore a mighty people will honor You* (Isaiah 25:3).”

They heard a voice of legions and camps, saying, *Yours, O YHVH, are the greatness and the power and the beauty and the victory and the splendor—yes, all that is in heaven and on earth. Yours, O YHVH are kingship and preeminence above all. Wealth and honor proceed from You; You have dominion over all…* (1 Chronicles 29:11–12), until *exalted though it is above all blessing and praise!* (Nehemiah 9:5).[169]

They were amazed, and went on. Meanwhile, daylight was shining. Turning their heads, they saw the whole desert covered in clouds of glory—shining, sparkling in many colors.[170]

They said to one another, “Surely, the blessed Holy One wishes to be glorified by the praise of the Generation of the Desert, for there has never been in the world a generation as lofty as this one, nor will there be until King Messiah comes. Surely, all that the blessed Holy One has shown us was only to demonstrate their Lord’s love for them, to reveal that they have a fine share and are denizens of the World that is Coming, destined to be revived first, as is said: *Your dead will live* (Isaiah 26:19)—these are the Generation of the Desert.”[171]

He said to him, “Do you know something new of which I am naked?”[172]

He replied, “Speak.”

He said, “The returning voice I wish to know. A person raises his voice in the field or somewhere else—and another voice returns, unknown.”[173]

He replied, “O holy, pious one! Concerning this matter, many voices have been aroused and many subtle points made before the Head of the Academy. When the Head of the Academy descended, he said as follows: ‘This is how the matter has been established in the Heavenly Academy, and it is a precious mystery.[174]

“‘Come and see: There are three voices that are never lost—aside from voices of Torah and prayer, for these ascend on high and split the heavens. But there are other voices that do not ascend, yet are not lost, and they number three.

“‘The voice of a woman in labor when she is on the birthstool—that voice sweeps from one end of the world to the other.

“‘The voice of a human being when he departs from the world—that voice sweeps from one end of the world to the other.

“‘The voice of a snake when it sheds its skin—that voice sweeps from one end of the world to the other.’[175]

“O holy, pious one! How great and precious is this matter! What happens to these voices, and where do they enter and settle? These voices are of pain, and they go flying through the air from one end of the world to the other, and they enter crevices and holes in the earth, and are hidden away there. When [169a] a person raises his voice, they are aroused by that sound.

“The voice of a snake is not aroused by a person’s voice. How is it aroused? By striking. When a person strikes a blow, the hidden voice of the snake is aroused toward that sound—and no other one. Sound arouses sound, kind to kind.[176]

“Consequently, on the day of Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the shofar arouses the sound of the Shofar, kind following kind.[177]

“The snake inclines to evil, to strike and kill. The voice of this snake is aroused only by its own kind; and this is when a person strikes the ground with a stick, calling its kind. Then that voice of the snake is aroused to respond to its kind—and this mystery is concealed.”[178]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Certainly this matter is sealed, and I am amazed how King Solomon didn’t know this!”[179]

He replied, “King Solomon certainly knew, but not so deeply. What he didn’t know was that voice—its effectiveness and how it settles.

“The Head of the Academy said as follows: This subtle point King Solomon did not know—for, look, that voice is composed of spirit and soul, breath of bones, pain of flesh; and it sweeps through the air, and each one separates from the other! When it reaches the place that it enters, it settles as if dead. All those sorcerers and wizards know these

matters through their witchcraft, and they bend down to the ground and hear this voice—mingled of spirit, soul, and breath of bones—and they convey the information. This is *a ghost from the ground* (Isaiah 29:4). So, Solomon sought to know what happens to that voice, but he never found out. Happy is your share, O truly virtuous one![180]

"When a person arouses a voice, they immediately mingle; and that [returning] voice is aroused, and it is not empowered to extend any longer—only as much as the voice aroused by the person, no more. If a person prolongs his voice, [the echo] does not extend as far with him, but rather [is aroused] toward the end of [his] voice, since it cannot be prolonged. Why? Because when [the voice] first issued, it extended from one end of the world to the other; and now that it has entered there, it cannot extend [any farther], since it has no room to roam as before."[181]

Rabbi Shim'on rejoiced, and said, "If I have been privileged to hear only this utterance, it is enough to make me happy, for I have succeeded in hearing words of truth about that world!"[182]

He said to him, "O holy, pious one! If you only knew the joy of words in that world in the presence of the Head of the Academy, you would rejoice even more."[183]

He said to him, "What innovation was there now, when you came to me?"[184]

He replied, "The Head of the Academy opened with a verse, saying, '*Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes* (Genesis 46:4). Why is there joy in closing the eyes of the dead? Because the eyes are colors of this world, a vision and image of this world—[now] this world and its vision are concealed from him. With the shutting of his eyes, the whole vision of this world is darkened to him; vision of his eyes is darkened for him—from then on, he has no vision in this world.'"[185]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Fine is the regulation of the ancient ones; their wisdom surpasses that of the holy

angels!”[186]

He said to him, “Why, of all his sons, would Joseph *lay his hand*? If you say, ‘Because of the good tidings about him,’ then the verse should read *You will see Joseph alive*. But *will lay his hand*, because he was his love. Thus, the light of this world was concealed from one and obtained by the other. One who shuts the eyes of his beloved demonstrates as follows: ‘Your vision of this world is lost; now I am your vision instead. From now on, another vision —of that world—will be arranged for you.’”[187]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “How does this benefit the dead? What advantage does it provide him? Whoever wishes to ask will say that one must open his eyes, in order to demonstrate that he is still destined to return to the vision of this world as before.”[188]

He replied, “O holy, pious one! Surely, if all vision of this world were not concealed from him, if it all were not lost to him, he would have no vision and share of that world. This world is opposite to that world, in which we are. For in the time of the revival of the dead, not even a hairbreadth of a human will remain from the fashioning of this world, since everything will first be dissolved by that [169b] dew, and all filth will be eliminated from him; and then he will become like leavened dough, from which an entire body will be formed—a new creature. So it is here.”[189]

Rabbi Shim’on said to him, “I certainly know that you are clothed there in a splendid garment of a pure holy body. Is there something similar in this world—a person appearing in that body as you exist in that world?”[190]

He replied, “This question was posed before the Head of the Academy by two youths who were clothed among us after suffering torment for a certain sin, which it is unseemly to reveal. They asked this before the Head of the Academy, and he replied that indeed something similar did happen in this world. How do we know? As is written: *It*

happened on the third day, that Esther put on מלכות (*malkhut*), *royalty* (Esther 5:1)—she was clothed in the image of that world. *Malkhut, Kingdom*—the Holy Spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven wafted a spirit from the spirit of the atmosphere of that world, and Esther was robed in it. When she entered into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and he saw that garment of light—her image resembling an angel—his soul flew away from him momentarily.[191]

"Mordecai, as well, as is written: *Mordecai left the king's presence* בלבוש מלכות (*bi-lvush malkhut*), *in a royal garment* (Esther 8:15)—*in a garment of Malkhut*, surely: an image of that world. Therefore it is written: *because the fear of Mordecai had fallen upon them* (ibid. 9:3)—*the fear of Mordecai*, not *the fear of Ahasuerus*."[192]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "How sweet are these words! Happy is my share! Now I surely know that right in this world the righteous are clothed in the garment called *a garment of Malkhut*. It is surely so!"

He said to him, "The air of the Garden of Eden is the wafting of the Holy Spirit, and within it the righteous are clothed as they were in this world. Afterward, the Holy Spirit settles upon the head of each one, becoming his crown. This is what happened to Mordecai, as is written: *in a garment of Malkhut*—an image of that world. Afterward, *with a magnificent crown of gold* (Esther 8:15)—the crown resting on the heads of the righteous in that world.[193]

"When Israel received the Torah, they possessed something similar—until it was written of them *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb on* (Exodus 33:6); they were stripped of that garment.[194]

"So, too, of Joshua the high priest is written *'Take the filthy garments off him!'* and then, *and they clothed him in garments* (Zechariah 3:4–5)—garments of that world. From here, previous words. From here we learn that as long as the body of this world endures in the grave, the spirit is not

clothed in the garment of that world, as is written: *They took the filthy garments off him*, first, and afterward *they clothed him in garments*.[195]

"*As the angel of YHVH remained standing* (Zechariah 3:5). What is meant by *standing*? Well, this is the crown called *angel of YHVH*, who stands upon the head of the righteous; this is *standing—standing* upon the head, above, after they have been clothed in a splendid garment.[196]

"Two bodies together cannot endure. As long as this one exists, the spirit cannot receive another. When this one passes away, the other is instantly ready, surely! This one exits and that one enters. Just like the good impulse and the evil impulse in this world—the blessed Holy One does not want both of them enduring together."[197]

He said to him, "I am astonished by what is written: *and Satan standing at his right to accuse him* (Zechariah 3:1). If this is the case with Joshua son of Jehozadak, then all the more so with other inhabitants of the world!"[198]

He replied, "O holy, pious one! How hidden and concealed are these matters!"

He said, "Even though the Companions comprehend matters of that world, they cannot comprehend these mysteries. For once a person is in that world, what benefit is there for Satan to accuse him? Isn't he satisfied that he has removed his soul and killed him?"[199]

He replied, "O holy, pious one, happy is your share! Come and see: Satan's only desire is to prevent that righteous one from being clothed in a pure, holy garment. As soon as he sees his garment being thrust away and considered worthless, he accuses him. Why? Because if he is clothed in that splendid garment, instantly the filthy garment and Satan's product will be nullified and eliminated from the world.[200]

"Furthermore, as long as he is not clothed, the spirit visits his filthy body, which pleases Satan. As soon as he is

clothed [170a] in that splendid garment, this body is nullified—all memory of it vanishing forever.[201]

"Now, you might say that we visit the cemetery at the beginning of each night. Well, this is not for the body, but rather *nafsha*, the soul, moves naked as long as the flesh endures; and *ruḥa*, the spirit, visits her—and *nafsha* visits the body. But now, the visit is to *nafsha*, subsiding and absorbed gently within the bones. Therefore, at the beginning of each night, visit of *ruḥa* to *nafsha*—not for the flesh.[202]

"O holy, pious one! Come and I will reveal to you a sealed matter. The structure of the human body is as follows: *ruḥa*, spirit, from the Holy Spirit; *nishmeta*, soul-breath, from within the Tree of Life. As soon as the Holy Spirit provides power, immediately Her chariots provide theirs. Their power is bones and members—all from their side, arrayed one upon the other.[203]

"The Other Side provides flesh; from its side comes flesh and nothing else. Its chariots provide all those sinews and veins conveying blood to the flesh.[204]

"After these provide, the heavens provide their powers. And what are they? Skin, stretched over all, corresponding to their pattern. Afterward, heaven and earth join as one—providing fire, water, air, and earth, to protect all of these, covering all.[205]

"Afterward, each one takes the portion that it provided, which is nullified. As for the Holy Spirit and Her chariots: the Holy Spirit—Her *ruḥa*, spirit, endures; and *nishmeta*, the soul, ascends. The chariots of the Holy Spirit—their bones endure. Therefore the essence of the body is the bones, and so it is written *He will invigorate your bones* (Isaiah 58:11), which is not written of the flesh.[206]

"As long as the flesh of the Other Side endures abidingly, Satan is poised to accuse. Once the flesh is eliminated, he is powerless to attack, since he has nothing on which to base himself. Thus it is written *His flesh wastes*

away from sight, and his bones are rubbed away—they can no longer be seen (Job 33:21). [*From sight*]—from the sight of Satan, poised to accuse, but he cannot because *his flesh wastes away*.[207]

"ושפו עצמותיו (*Ve-shuppu atsmotav*), *And his bones are rubbed away; they can no longer be seen*—they cannot be seen by him, for he has no share in them. Even though every single one שף (*shaph*), has slipped, from its place, he makes no claim against them and does not stand to accuse them. For once the flesh is consumed, he does not demand judgment nor stand to accuse, nor does he mention that person regarding anything in the world."[208]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Now I perceive matters perfectly. Surely it is fitting for him to accuse."[209]

He said to him, "Rabbi Shim'on, gird your weapon and prepare yourself! If you wish to comprehend the matters that you began, or to ask about these matters, speak!"[210]

He said, "Certainly! Look, I know that my wife has passed away; she didn't know about me, whereas the Companions know. Women—why are they light-minded?"[211]

He replied, "דעתא (*Da'ta*), Mind, proceeds on six rungs, each one taking its share; what remains is קל (*qal*), light, yet precious. Concerning this matter, do not ask; for I know that you didn't ask about your wife, but rather about what is written: *See, YHVH rides on* עב קל (*av qal*), *a swift cloud* (Isaiah 19:1). That *av qal, swift cloud*, is called דעת (*Da'at*) of that כלה (*Kallah*), Bride, Awe of *YHVH*—poised in the middle, like supernal *Da'at*, but called *qal*, light.[212]

"Yes, I know what your question is. But begin to gird your weapon and tie your knot, for it is time to reveal what you began.... the fashioning upon the breadth of Temple, the hall of the courtyard, within. In this courtyard are twelve entrances, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. On one entrance is written Reuben, on another is written Simeon, and similarly all the tribes of Israel are inscribed on those entrances. When they ascend to appear

before the Master of the Universe, if the one entering the opening marked Reuben is from the tribe of Reuben, the openings accept him; if not, they spew him out. And so with all of them, for the openings accept only one who is from the tribe marked on them. Thereby, every single one is engraved and identified.[213]

"Three hundred and sixty-five pillars of glowing light stand on each of those four sides. All these pillars are called Living Pillars, for their light does not [170b] subside in one place; all of them—some ascend and some descend, making room for one another. Those ascending strike each other, playing a melody, and similarly, those descending.[214]

"Those ascending, playing a melody—what melody do they play? An orphaned song: *A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has worked wonders…* (Psalms 98:1). *A new song*—now, is there such a thing as an ancient song? However, a *song* that until now the holy angels did not offer in praise; for it is new, and may it be new. Why is it new? Because the one who renews his youth offers it in praise.[215]

"The Head of the Academy said as follows: 'This one is called *new* and he is *new*, because he cleaves to the sun inseparably—as opposed to the Other Side, who contains nothing new, of whom is written *There is nothing new* (Ecclesiastes 1:9); he is old, withered, and never rejuvenated.'[216]

"The Head of the Academy opened again, 'Sarah was rejuvenated with delight, as caused by her rung, for it is written: *After I have withered*, היתה לי עדנה (*hayetah li ednah*), *I have had delight* (Genesis 18:12). What is meant by *ednah*? A flow of supernal עדן (*eden*), Eden. And since it was conveyed to her from the aspect of the Feminine, it is written עדנה (*ednah*), with a ה (*he*). So it is written היתה (*hayetah*) and not היה (*hayah*).[217]

"'*And my lord is old* (Genesis 18:12). Now, even though he was old, was he incapable of having children? Rather, to belittle herself for having clung to that old fool who is never

rejuvenated and cannot have offspring—for if he did have offspring, the world would be obliterated. Therefore, the blessed Holy One repeated: *Why is it that Sarah laughed*, [*saying, "Shall I really give birth, when I am so old"*] (ibid., 13).[218]

"'Now, you might say, "But look at what is written: *Abraham was old*, בא בימים (*ba ba-yamim*), *coming into days* (Genesis 24:1)!" Well, *coming into days*—into those supernal days, who renew their youth like an eagle.'[219]

"So, this melody is a melody of that *new* one. *Has won Him victory*—whom? That *new* one—for whom the right hand of the supernal King and His arm have *won victory*.[220]

"Similarly, those descending play and chant another orphaned song. What is it? *A psalm of thanksgiving* (Psalms 100:1), which is also orphaned.[221]

"Their light appears as one, and as they revolve five colors of light appear in every single pillar. These pillars are all hollow inside, and as they ascend and descend, flames of fire shoot forth, like calyx and blossom.[222]

"Above every single pillar are three apples, in which three colors collide: red, green, and white. In every single color flash protruding letters of flames of green fire, never subsiding, comprehended by no one.[223]

"Four wheels arranged in design in every single pillar—in those wheels are great wonders. As they revolve, they emit bells of gold and precious stones, which are immediately absorbed back within, not falling to the ground. When those bells of gold and precious stones emerge, through the revolving of the wheels is heard a voice, saying, *This is the heritage of the servants of YHVH, and their triumph through Me—declares YHVH* (Isaiah 54:17).[224]

"Two lions in every single wheel—one lion on this side, one on the other, all of green fire. In the whirl of revolving wheels, these embrace one another; and all move in a whirl, clinging to each other. When the pillars ascend, the lions

roar at one another; and apples fly through the air, ascending on high—colliding with each other in the air, then returning to their places and from there falling. The lions stretch their paws to snatch them, but they rise on their own.

"O holy, pious one! Who has seen the skilled artistry by which the blessed Holy One fashioned these pillars?

"At midday, two eagles emerge in every single wheel—from where they emerge is not known—and they settle upon the heads of these lions. Then the pillars and wheels subside, standing in their position; and the apples fall onto the mouths of the eagles, who receive them, and immediately [the apples] fly from mouth to mouth, flitting between them, then returning to their place, which is not known. An hour-and-a-half later, the eagles raise their voice and chant an enticing melody and are hidden away—where, is not known.[225]

"Around those pillars are lattices designed of red fire, white light, and strands of gold, circling all around on every side—and a spring of water, [171a] as is said: *On that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Eastern Sea and half to the Western Sea* (Zechariah 14:8).[226]

"Here the Head of the Academy explained this verse inside and outside. While he was explaining it—O holy one, O holy one!—a child's voice was aroused outside. This was the child who studied and presented his learning in the presence of a pillar of the world—the son of Rabbi Yehudah, whom you raised. He was being held for judgment, and his voice was roused by this verse. He said, 'How can waters below ascend higher—to a place that is higher by several rungs? And what need is there for those waters? And how can a place from which all springs and streams issue—those springs and streams flowing ceaselessly—be saturated from a parched place? Who has ever seen a dug-out pit providing water to a flowing spring? Can Jerusalem provide water *to*

the Primordial Sea, the place from which all waters of the world issue and flow?’[227]

“O holy, pious one! To this voice of his, all voices of members of the Academies there listened, turning still. Consequently, the masters of Judgment could not come near him.”[228]

Rabbi Shim’on wept. He said to him, “Do not weep, Holy Lamp. Happy is your share, for even children, on account of you, utter concealed secrets of Torah![229]

“Come and I will tell you what all the members of the Academy did because of that child’s voice—when his voice pierced like an arrow, with all of them listening. At that moment, the Head of the Academy trembled, along with all those assembled before him. He said, ‘Who are those that do not permit this son of the Living God to enter?’[230]

“Three pillars, standing before the Head of the Academy, rose and grasped him, and he entered; and all the members of the Academies gathered around him. The Head of the Academy said, ‘Utter your verse, holy son!’[231]

“He replied, ‘Until now I was afraid, because I’m from another academy. And when the masters of Judgment were clutching me, they told me so.’[232]

“He said to him, ‘Do not fear, holy son! Here you will be among us seven days, and you will bathe each day in holy dew. Afterward, you will be taken up into that Academy along with the other children here.’[233]

“That child opened, saying, ‘ביום ההוא (*Ba-yom ha-hu*), *On that day. Ha-hu, That*—which one is not known. But everywhere *on that day* indicates the last day. Why is it called *ha-hu, that*? Well, this is the day linking end to beginning. Beginning is called הוא (*hu*), *he*, as is said: *The Levite will serve hu, he* (Numbers 18:23)—service of the Levite is to the rung called *hu, he*. The end of all rungs is called ההוא (*ha-hu*), *that*—ה הוא (*he, hu*)—signifying end of all rungs, which is beginning, and all is one. Since it is the end, ה (*he*) is added to it.[234]

“‘Jerusalem is destined to generate water and issue a flow. Here it should be said that the end of all rungs is not Jerusalem. However, surely Jerusalem and *that day* are all one. What is the difference between them? Well, when all of Jerusalem’s holy rungs surround her, they are called Jerusalem. They are ranged as follows: there are surrounding rungs called courtyards, some inner and some outer. There are rungs that, when surrounding, are called chambers; there are rungs that, when surrounding, are called sanctuary and inner sanctuary. Within all these rungs is one point—*All the princess’s treasure is within* (Psalms 45:14). This point is called *ha-hu, that*, and your mnemonic is הַהוּא (*Ha-hu*), *That, is called Land* (Deuteronomy 3:13).[235]

“‘When this day will arise, from the lattices of the courtyard will rise a flow of waters, and this flow will be from *the Primordial Sea*. Like a mother whose son is between her arms, and from the abundance of milk that he sucks, filling his mouth and swelling, he empties milk into his mother’s mouth. So, *half of it to the Primordial Sea*.’”[236]

“The Head of the Academy grasped him and kissed him. He said, ‘O life of this world, holy son! This is how they established it in the Heavenly Academy, and it is certainly so. *The Final Sea*—Her last rungs.’[237]

“O holy, pious one! How much joy upon joy was added by that child among the members of the Academies! Twenty-seven reasons of Torah were uttered by that child, and his father was adorned with twenty-seven crowns on that day. Happy is the share of one who succeeds in teaching his son!”[238]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “His father did not succeed in teaching him!”

He replied, “His father bestowed.[239]

“There was a concealed mystery [171b] about this child—why he departed from the world and why they sought to punish him. His judgment, from which he was saved, was in public; for he embarrassed his teacher in front of everyone

with his questions and difficulties. He didn't care enough to go to another to improve his learning, and he distressed his teacher; so they sought to punish him harshly.[240]

"Therefore, even though he was saved from the masters of Judgment, he was not saved here. Seven days passed without his image being completed; and when he bathed, it was very painful. He was embarrassed in front of everyone all those seven days, until his image was completed. As for why he departed from the world, do not seek to know. O Rabbi, O Rabbi, happy is your share![241]

"Come and see: Beneath the circle of those lattices there, amid the waters of that flowing spring, one flow is distinguished—spreading, gushing, entering the Great Sea that is there, tracing a path in the heart of the sea, from which Leviathan drinks until he is happily satiated and grows immensely. When another flow issues, it spreads secretly beneath the depths into the Final Sea, subduing and overwhelming all those raging waters and mighty waters, so that they will not come forth to destroy the inhabitants of the world. Your mnemonic is: *who makes a way through the sea, a path through mighty waters* (Isaiah 43:16).[242]

"In the middle of that courtyard are two cherubim, a product of the artistry of the Holy King, which those above and those below cannot comprehend. Beneath them, all of Israel are destined to stand, so as not to depart from their sheltering wings. Happy will be all those who enter beneath their wings!

"Twelve thousand towers of the sun, illumining a childlike image of pearls and precious stones fittingly. Thereby, the Head of the Academy attained that glory. Who can utter the words that are innovated every day in the presence of the Head of the Academy?[243]

“O Rabbi! Every time that male spirits ascend on high, precisely then women come forth and gather within the palace of Bithiah, rejoicing there over many ancient words. From there, accompanied by her, they go out and enter the palace of Serah, rejoicing over many new and ancient words. From there they go out, accompanied by her, and enter the palace of Jochebed—and so into all those palaces.[244]

“Now, Rabbi, I will tell you a certain secret. Come and see: On every single Sabbatical, a proclamation goes forth: ‘Gather together, men and women and all those scions of faith, and ascend!’ Then they all strip themselves—men and women—and ascend, together with all those children, *weaned from milk* (Isaiah 28:9); and they enter the Heavenly Academy, where they witness their delightful ascension, joy upon joy! The Youth, in whose hand are the keys of his Lord, rises and tells them various new and ancient words, and they all see joy unmatched by any other.[245]

“Afterward, they all enter through several curtains; and numerous chambers are hidden there, shining from *the beauty of YHVH* within the Palace of Love, corresponding to what is written: *to gaze upon the beauty of YHVH and to reflect in His palace* (Psalms 27:4).[246]

“Afterward, the children fly above, and [the men and women] fly below, returning to their places and clothing themselves as before. Happy the people who await all the goodness of that world!”[247]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “How sweet the words that I have heard! Happy is my share that I was privileged to hear all this! Happy is the day that I came out here!”

They said to him, “Rabbi, for three days we are permitted to come to you. One day later… your joy….”[248]

“… He conveys a flow from his side, and is concealed and covered beneath the place called *the chamber of the*

runners (1 Kings 14:28) until midnight.[249]

"After midnight, a flame of the pillar of Isaac shoots forth, striking the rooster called גבר (*gever*), who resembles another, higher *gever* above him. Once it strikes him, this *gever* calls out, producing six sounds—all intelligent.[250]

"When he calls out, all roosters of this world call—another flame shoots forth from him, reaching them beneath their wings and they call out. What does he call out? In the first hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH is in power, the voice of YHVH is in majesty* (Psalms 29:4). In the second hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH summons the city…* (Micah 6:9). In the third hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH hews flames of fire* (Psalms 29:7). [172a] In the fourth hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH makes the wilderness shake…* (ibid., 8). In the fifth hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH is over the waters…* (ibid., 3). In the sixth hour, he calls: *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of does and lays bare the forests. And in His palace* [*all says 'Glory'*] (ibid., 9). Afterward, he calls: *A voice says, 'Proclaim!' Another asks, 'What shall I proclaim?'…* (Isaiah 40:6). This is the rooster—who calls without subsiding, afterward calling out as before.[251]

"What does he call out? All deeds of the inhabitants of the world; for he is master of the ledger, with a scribe's kit at his waist, and he records all deeds of the world's inhabitants every day. At night, after he calls out all these announcements, he calls out everything he wrote down during the day.[252]

"Were it not for the toes of his feet—which are two rungs: one standing in the middle (which is big) and the one standing behind (which is small)—which impede him, he would burn up the world with his flames.[253]

"What do they do? As soon as morning rises and a thread of radiance issues from the side of the south, they all merge, and the two feet become two hooves—like a calf,

fulfilling what is written: *and their feet were like a calf's foot* (Ezekiel 1:7). You already know this secret.[254]

"… You asked about the branch of the threshing floor….[255]

"Within this courtyard there are 365 palaces, like the number of days in the year, and on every single entrance is written Tranquility, fulfilling *May there be peace within your ramparts, tranquility in your palaces* (Psalms 122:7). It is not known what is in these palaces, but all of them are arranged in artistic design; in each one seven configurations of gems are arranged within one another.[256]

"O holy, pious one! How greatly the Head of the Academy praises a certain palace, situated at the top of the eastern side of the courtyard—for there are four in the four corners of the world, but the palace on the eastern side increases its lights more than all of them.

"One day in the Great Sea, Leviathan emerges, and the whole sea shakes, all the fish scattering here and there. When Leviathan reaches the opening of the Abyss, he begins to rejoice, and there he rests.

"… depths, except for that one… like the appearance of a spring, and lights are covered, none of them visible except the light of the palace on this eastern side.[257]

"The gem that Leviathan draws from the depth called Sigdon—what is it made of? Well, this day on which Leviathan draws it forth and the sea shakes is the day on which the Temple was destroyed, *Tish'ah be-Av*. As for that gem—when the blessed Holy One remembers His children and sheds two tears into the Great Sea, one falls into this depth called Sigdon and one falls into another depth called Gilba. For there are five other depths in the Great Sea, but they are not as significant as these. Once those tears fall, they congeal within depths; one…, and one sinks into the depth called Gilba.[258]

“Below, within the dregs of wine—evil dregs—emerges one agitator, the Accuser, Primordial Demon. He is in the spirit of the image of *Adam* when he approaches holiness. As soon as he is removed from there and seeks to descend, he must clothe himself in a garment to damage the world, and he descends with his chariots. And the first garment that he seizes is תבנית שור (*tavnit shor*), *the image of a bull*, the form of a bull. The first of those four damagers is *shor*, an ox, and those four are the primary ones to damage the world. All three primary causes of damage aside from *shor* belong to it, and therefore it is written: *They exchanged their glory for the image of a bull* (Psalms 106:20).[259]

“What is *eating grass* (ibid.)? We have already interpreted it, but the essence of the matter is that it has no share in the residue of bread or of the seven species of grain…, and it should not be there.[260]

“… and those [other ones] sit in their places. Before these leave, those are ready. The eyes cannot bear their radiance and sparkle. They move round and round, never still.[261]

“When a person gazes at this palace, immediately, at first glance, it appears small, yet not so small. He looks longer, and it appears large; he keeps looking, and it appears larger. The longer he looks, the more it seems to expand, until [172b] a glimpse like a hairbreadth seems immeasurable.

“Many works within, whose artistry is unfathomable. From it shines the courtyard and all it contains—aside from the cherubim, whose light ascends to the height of heaven in numerous colors and sparkling flashes. There are 1,575 fruitful vines in this courtyard.”[262]

“… [*The fool*] *hugs his hands* (Ecclesiastes 4:5), mourning bitterly, and afterward *eats his flesh* (ibid.) against his will, for he has no power to dominate anything else.[263]

“What benefit does he derive from all his luring, effort, and toil, since afterward he has power only over what is his? Then he dances joyously like a totally mindless fool, and goes on futilely, eating his flesh, with no authority over the rest. Bitterness above and below when Israel is in distress—consumed by their enemies, not providing power by their virtuous deeds, to escape from him.[264]

“Even regarding his flesh, which is from that side, the Holy King is displeased, since He is compassionate and gracious; but over what is His—the holy spirit and holy soul—neither those above or below can dominate it at all. So, all the machinations and all that evil one’s luring, plotting to dominate the holy spirit, and finally he fails and returns *and eats his flesh*—what benefit does he get?[265]

“Furthermore, they are all congealed in dense disturbance, and those above and below have no tranquility.[266]

“Come and I will tell you something. If you say that the Angel of Death feels joy when he kills people—not so! Rather, because he sees that this is his Master’s wish, he displays joy in fulfilling His will, as is written: *storm wind fulfilling His word* (Psalms 148:8).”[267]

Rabbi Shim’on said to him, “But look, he goes dancing joyously in front of women!”[268]

He replied, “O holy, pious one! Certainly so, to demonstrate before the King that he takes pleasure in His will. But his pleasure is in the women’s lamentation—he dances, with his ear toward the lamentation.”[269]

He said to him, “If so, why does he go and accuse a person above, mentioning his sins?”[270]

He replied, “Because he is an old fool, planning to gain dominion over the spirit, craving only that. In the end, he has power only over what is his: his flesh. Thus it is written: *His mischief recoils upon his own head* (Psalms 7:17).”[271]

“… It goes and seeks to convulse the world—waters rising from other depths, threatening to flood the world. Those tears are boiling, hotter than any fire in the world. From the intensity of their boiling, waters congeal in the gelled sea. If the blessed Holy One did not beckon a gust from the side of Abraham—from his pillar—manifesting it upon the world, the world could not endure for even an instant.[272]

“When those tears fall into the sea, a sound is heard amid the waves, reaching to the Cave of Machpelah. From the roar heard there when they enter the sea, the ancient patriarchs are awakened; and they rise, thinking that the blessed Holy One seeks to overturn the world—until a voice issues, telling them: ‘Do not fear, holy, beloved ones! For your sake, the blessed Holy One remembers your children; and He wishes to redeem them, as you will see.’”[273]

“All the alphabets combine, permuting one another, joining in permutation of the Holy Name. As soon as letters appear in this permutation, they are hidden away and others emerge; and so with all of them: these hidden, and those emerging—all within the hollow of those calyxes.[274]

“Furthermore, they fly three times a day in the air, shooting forth; and the Name stands in four letters, suspended in the air for an hour-and-a-half. Afterward this is hidden away; immediately there issues from the air, from its hollow, the Name of Twelve Letters—flying, suspended in the air for one hour, not more. Afterward this is hidden away; immediately there emerges a permutation of other letters—the Name of Twenty Letters—suspended in the air for another hour. This is hidden away, and immediately letters emerge from another hollow—the Name of Twenty-eight Letters, all adorned with their crowns, standing for an hour-and-a-half. This is hidden away, and immediately there emerges, suspended in the air, the Name of Twenty-five Letters in their permutations, standing for an hour and three minutes.[275]

“Letters of Forty-two Letters emerge, enduring forever.... None of the letters ever [173a] subside—protruding, sparkling forth, ascending and descending. No one can comprehend them, except for the Messiah with great effort. This is hidden away after standing for two hours and twenty-two minutes. Then, the Engraved Name of Seventy-two Letters emerges, standing, suspended in the air for an hour-and-a-half.[276]

“All these Names emerge and appear only once a day, but those alphabets appear flying in the air, permuting one another, three times a day. When the letters of the alphabets fly, some fly from here and some from there, all combining.

“When the Head of the Academy descended there with the Messiah, he saw in the permutation of alphabets letters such as Daniel saw: ממתוס ננקפי אאלרן (*mem, mem, tav, vav, samekh; nun, nun, qof, pe, yod; alef, alef, lamed, resh, nun*).[277]

“... For every Sabbath eve, as Israel sanctifies the day below, a herald proclaims in all four directions: Assemble, camps of the world! Prepare the holy thrones!’ Who has seen the joy in 390 firmaments! Countless princes and rulers gather to their stations.[278]

“As soon as Israel below sanctify, the blessed Holy One is aroused. Then the Tree of Life strikes its leaves with a breeze from the World that is Coming, and those branches of the Tree sway, wafting fragrances of the World that is Coming.[279]

“That Tree of Life is aroused, and generates holy souls, spreading over the world. Nevertheless, souls emerge and souls enter, these stimulating those. These emerge and those enter, and the Tree of Life is in joy.[280]

“Then all of Israel are adorned with crowns of those holy souls, all of them in joy, in tranquility. Every Sabbath, they feel that joy and tranquility—and similarly the righteous in the Garden, all of whom ascend and revel in

sublime delight of the World that is Coming. When Sabbath departs, all those souls fly away and ascend.

"Come and see: When Sabbath enters, souls descend to settle upon the Holy People, and souls of the righteous ascend on high. When Sabbath departs, souls ascend—those that settled upon Israel—and souls descend, those souls of the righteous.[281]

"As soon as all those souls that settled upon Israel ascend, they stand in their image before the Holy King, and the blessed Holy One asks each of them, 'What innovation of Torah did you discover in that world?' Happy is one who utters an innovation of Torah in His presence! How much joy he generates! The blessed Holy One gathers His Family and says, 'Hear the innovation of Torah uttered by this soul of so-and-so!' They all confirm that word in two Academies—they below, and the blessed Holy One above seals that word.[282]

"Come and see: When a word is innovated in Torah, and a soul descending on Sabbath engages in those new words and ascends on high, the whole Celestial Family listens to that word, and the holy *ḥayyot*, living beings, increase their wings, clothing themselves in wings.[283]

"But when the blessed Holy One asks them and they do not respond, remaining silent, then what is written of the holy *ḥayyot*? בעמדם (*Be-omdam*), *When they stood still, their wings slackened* (Ezekiel 1:24)—as is said: *For* עמדו (*amedu*), *they stood, and no longer responded* (Job 32:16); *As he opened it, all the people amedu, stood* (Nehemiah 8:5).[284]

"Now, you might ask, 'Why is silence called "standing"'? Well, in speech there are members moving: heart, lung, windpipe, tongue, teeth, lips, flesh. And in silence they stand in their position without moving; so it is 'standing.'

"For Rav Hamnuna said: *May He send you help from the sanctum…* (Psalms 20:3). *From the sanctum*—sanctifying of the hands. *And from Zion may He sustain you* (ibid.)—*Ha-motsi* (Who brings forth [bread]), which sustains a

person’s heart. *May He recall all your grain offerings* (ibid., 4)—*all*, to include something else, namely the final washing of hands. *And your ascent offerings may He relish. Selah* (ibid.)—*Birkat ha-Mazon* (Grace after Meals). If you do so, *May He grant your heart’s desire, and all you plan may He fulfill* (ibid., 5). And on Sabbath, מקדש (*mi-qodesh*), *from the sanctum—Qiddusha Rabba* (The Great Sanctification).’ On account of this word, the righteous were crowned in the Garden of Eden from one Sabbath to the next.[285]

“He opened again, saying: *Ascend a lofty mountain*, [173b] *O herald of joy to Zion; raise your voice with power, O herald of joy to Jerusalem! Raise it, have no fear; announce to the cities of Judah:* [*Behold your God!*] (Isaiah 40:9). *A lofty mountain*—surely Mount Abarim, the site of Moses’ burial. They have already established that *Shekhinah* will ascend there and announce the good news to the world; but it includes all. *O herald of joy to Zion*—Hephzibah, wife of Nathan son of David, who is the mother of the Messiah, Menaḥem son of Ami’el. She will come forth and announce the good news, and she is in the category of *herald of joy to Zion*.[286]

“A voice will be heard in the world, and two kings will be aroused to wage war, and the Holy Name will emerge over the world. What will she announce? *Behold, YHVH Elohim comes in might, and His arm wins triumph for Him; see, His reward is with Him, His recompense before Him* (Isaiah 40:10). *See, His reward is with Him*—for the blessed Holy One will proclaim to the entire Celestial Family: ‘Assemble and hold court! Whoever has surrendered his soul to sanctify My Name, what is his reward?’ And they will reply, ‘Such and such.’ ‘Whoever has suffered many revilements and curses every day for My sake, what is his reward?’ They will reply, ‘Such and such.’ ‘Whoever has been punished every day for My sake, what is his reward?’ They will reply, ‘Such and such.’ As is written: *See, His reward is with Him, His recompense before Him*.[287]

“What is meant by פעולתו (*pe’ulato*), *His recompense*? As is written: *How abundant Your goodness that You have hidden for those who revere You*, פעלת (*pa’alta*), *that You have wrought, for those who shelter in You!* (Psalms 31:20)—this is *pe’ulato, His recompense*.[288]

“What is meant by *before the eyes of humankind* (Psalms, ibid.)? Well, ‘before the eyes of the nations of the world.’

“*That You have hidden*. What is meant by צפנת (*tsafanta*), *You have hidden*? Now, who could rob or seize from His hands what He wishes to give, that it would be written *You have hidden*?[289]

“But go and see the compassionate deeds performed by the blessed Holy One! With that by which He strikes, He provides healing. With what does He strike? With the left. With the right, He draws near; with the left, He strikes. Yet with that by which He strikes, He provides healing to the world! מצפון (*Mi-tsafon*), *From the north, evil will be let loose* (Jeremiah 1:14)—*from the north* He strikes, since from there issue all judgments and all harsh decrees; yet there abide all the fine rewards and benefits that the blessed Holy One intends to bestow upon Israel. In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will call on *the north*, saying to it, ‘In you I have placed all the benefits and fine rewards for My children who have suffered so many calamities in this world for the sanctification of My Name. Give the fine reward that I entrusted to you!’[290]

“As is said: *I will say* לצפון (*la-tsafon*), *to the north, ‘Give!’ and to the south, ‘Do not withhold!…’* (Isaiah 43:6). Now, is this the correct manner? Surely, all blessings are from the south, and all goodness of the world issues from the south, yet He says *Do not withhold*?[291]

“However, in that time, the blessed Holy One will awaken Abraham and say to him, ‘Rise, for the time has come for Me to redeem your children and to grant them a fine reward for all that they suffered in exile!’ Since

Abraham was involved in their being sold—as is written: *unless their Rock had sold them* (Deuteronomy 32:30); this is Abraham—he becomes like someone to whom this seems unfavorable, and acts like someone wishing for them to suffer further for their sins and saying, 'Exact retribution for their sins and their transgressions!'[292]

"The blessed Holy One says to Abraham, 'I know that everything you said was merely on the surface; I, too, will be on the surface: *Do not withhold!* I want to pacify you regarding your children. Do not deprive them of benefits, do not deprive them of a fine reward. They have suffered so much for their sins!' Thus, *I will say la-tsafon, to the north, 'Give*!'—corresponding to *that tsafanta, You have hidden*. This is the utterance that she will announce.[293]

"Furthermore, she will announce good news a second time, when *Shekhinah* ascends that lofty mountain and then goes to inform the patriarchs. Immediately, She will go to Jerusalem and see it in its destruction; She will enter Zion and there shriek a scream as before, over Her dwelling place and Her glory at that site. There She will swear that She will not move from there or leave until the blessed Holy One redeems Her children. This same Hephzibah will proclaim as before, saying: *Oh, shout for joy, you who dwell in Zion! For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel* (Isaiah 12:6). What is meant by *great in your midst*? The blessed Holy One, who is coming to Her to raise Her from the dust of Zion and say to Her, *Shake off the dust, arise; sit enthroned, O Jerusalem!* (ibid. 52:2), surely![294]

"By this, too, how much joy upon joy for the righteous in the Garden of Eden! So, happy is one whose Sabbath soul bears witness to an innovation of Torah in the presence of the Holy King! For the blessed Holy One, His whole Family, and all those souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden are crowned with that word.[295]

"Furthermore, I have heard, O Holy Lamp, [174a] how that person's father is adorned with such glory upon glory,

crown upon crown. When the blessed Holy One says, ‘Gather to listen to an innovation and new words of Torah in the name of so-and-so, son of so-and-so!’ how many kiss him on the head! How many righteous ones adorn him when they descend! Happy is the share of all those who engage in Torah on the Sabbath day—even more than on other days!”[296]

COMMENTARY ON SHELAḤ LEKHA (continued)

THE SECTION OF TZITZIT[1]

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened, *"He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of YHVH, and the Accuser standing at his right to accuse him* (Zechariah 3:1). How happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One desires their glory above all inhabitants of the world—and has given them the holy Torah, and has given them faithful prophets who lead them by the Torah on the true path![2]

"Come and see: To all the various prophets appointed by the blessed Holy One for Israel, He revealed Himself on high, holy rungs; and they beheld the glorious splendor of the Holy King from a lofty place—but not as near as Moses, who was closer to the King than anyone. For happy is his share beyond all inhabitants of the world! Of him is written *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; and a vision, not in riddles* (Numbers 12:8); whereas other prophets saw from a distant place, as is said: *From afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3)."[3]

And Rabbi Ḥizkiyah said, "I have learned as follows: It is written *A man went from the house of Levi* (Exodus 2:1). *A man went*—the blessed Holy One, as is said: *YHVH is a man of war* (ibid. 15:3).[4]

"From the house of Levi—blessed Holy One, the place where supernal Wisdom and that river join as one, never separating. *From the house of Levi*—for He provided Leviathan for joy in the world, as is written: *Leviathan, whom You formed to play with* (Psalms 104:26).[5]

"And took a daughter of Levi (Exodus 2:1)—blessed Holy One, the place where radiance of the moon shines.[6]

"The woman conceived and bore a son (Exodus 2:2)—*the woman*, surely! As is said: לזאת (*Le-zot*), *This, shall be called Woman* (Genesis 2:23). At first, *a daughter of Levi*, and certainly so! But how can she be *a daughter of Levi* at first, and now, *woman*! Well, so we have learned: Until she

is married, a woman is called *daughter* of so-and-so; after she marries, she is called *woman*. And here, *daughter* and *woman*—all on a single rung.[7]

"And she hid him three months (Exodus 2:2)—three months during which harsh Judgment prevails in the world. And which are they? Tammuz, Av, and Tevet. What does this indicate? That before Moses descended to the world, he existed above; so *Shekhinah* coupled with him from the day he was born. Based upon this, Rabbi Shim'on said, 'Spirits of the righteous exist above before descending to the world.'[8]

"When she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him (Exodus 2:3). What is meant by *she took a papyrus basket for him*? She covered him with Her signs, so that he would be protected from those fish who swim amid the Great Sea, as is written: *gliding creatures there beyond number…* (Psalms 104:25). She covered him to be protected from them with a covering of precious lovely tusser silk, of two colors: white and black. And She set him down to float among them, [174b] so that he would become familiar with them—since he was destined to ascend among them another time, to receive the Torah.[9]

"Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile (Exodus 2:5)—the one coming from the side of the left, of harsh Judgment, as is said: *to bathe at the Nile—at the Nile*, precisely; not *at the sea*![10]

"Now, you might say, 'Look at what is written: *and your staff with which you struck the Nile* (Exodus 17:5)—Moses struck only the sea, yet Scripture calls it *the Nile*!' Well, *the Nile* was struck by Aaron with the help of Moses, so Scripture considers it as though [Moses] did it himself. Similarly, *Seven full days passed after YHVH struck the Nile* (ibid. 7:25)—yet Aaron struck it! However, since it derived from the aspect of the blessed Holy One, Scripture states: *YHVH struck*. Afterward, it is attributed to Moses.[11]

"Her maidens walking along the Nile (Exodus 2:5)—other camps coming from her side.[12]

“She opened it and saw him, the child (Exodus 2:6)—the verse should read ותראה (*va-tir’eh*), *and saw*; why ותראהו (*va-tir’ehu*), *and saw him*? After all, Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘You cannot find a word in the Torah, or even a single letter, that does not contain sublime, precious mysteries!’ Well, we have learned as follows: The insignia of the King and *Matronita* appeared in him—the mark of ו ,ה (*he, vav*). Immediately, *she had compassion on him*… (ibid.).[13]

“Until here, above; from here on, below, except for this verse: *His sister stationed herself afar* (Exodus 2:4). Whose sister? The sister of the one who calls Assembly of Israel *my sister*, as is said: *Open to me, my sister, my love* (Song of Songs 5:2).[14]

“Afar—as is said: *Afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3).[15]

“What is implied? That the righteous, before descending to the world, are known above to all—especially Moses. Further, that souls of the righteous are drawn from a supernal place, as we have established. We have learned the mystery of the matter, for this implies that the soul has a father and mother, just as the body on earth has a father and mother. In all aspects, whether above or below, everything comes into being from male and female.[16]

“They have already established the secret that is written: *Let the earth bring forth a living soul* (Genesis 1:24). *The earth*—Assembly of Israel. *A living soul*—soul of supernal Primordial Adam, as has been said.”[17]

Rabbi Abba came and kissed him. He said, “Surely, you have spoken well! All is so![18]

“Happy is the share of Moses, Faithful Prophet, beyond all other prophets of the world! Therefore, when he departed from the world, no one but the blessed Holy One attended to him, conducting him through His curtain. So Moses surpassed, in supernal prophecy and glorious rungs, all prophets of the world, whereas other prophets saw from behind many walls.”[19]

"He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing… (Zechariah 3:1). What did he see? That he was standing before the angel and wearing filthy garments, until a herald came forth, proclaiming: *Take the filthy garments off him!* (ibid., 4)."[20]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "It is written: *Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel* (Zechariah 3:3). What is meant by *before the angel*? That he was judging his case—the one of whom is written *Do not say before the angel that it was a mistake* (Ecclesiastes 5:5).[21]

"What does this imply? That every person who fails in this world to enwrap himself in a wrap of *mitsvah*, and to clothe himself in a garment of *mitsvah*, wears in that world a filthy garment, which should not be so, and is brought to judgment for this.[22]

"Come and see how many garments are prepared in that world! If a person fails to attain in this world garments of *mitsvah*, then when he enters that world, he is clothed in a certain garment recognized by masters of Hell. Woe to him who is clothed in that garment, for many [175a] wardens of judgment lie waiting to seize him and cast him into Hell! And King Solomon cried out, *At all times let your garments be white* (Ecclesiastes 9:8)."[23]

It has been taught in the mystery of the Book of Concealment: Four kings go forth toward four, hanging from them like grapes in a cluster. Bound with them are seven runners bearing witness, not staying in their places.[24] [175b]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "How many witnesses the blessed Holy One has produced to admonish human beings, and all of them stand facing a person with advice and testimony! He rises in the morning and stretches his feet to move—witnesses stand facing him, proclaiming: *The feet of his faithful He watches…* (1 Samuel 2:9); *Watch your foot when*

you go to the house of God (Ecclesiastes 4:17); *Level the path of your foot* (Proverbs 4:26).[25]

"He opens his eyes to see the world—witnesses say, *Keep your eyes looking forward* (Proverbs 4:25). He rises to speak—witnesses say, *Keep your tongue from evil…* (Psalms 34:14). He extends his hands for worldly matters—witnesses say, *Swerve from evil and do good* (ibid., 15).

"If he listens to them, fine; if not, it is written *and the Accuser standing at his right to accuse him* (Zechariah 3:1)—all of them testify against him above concerning his sins. If a person desires to strive in the service of the blessed Holy One, they all become advocates before him and stand to testify in his favor when he needs it.[26]

"He rises in the morning, recites various blessings, and places tefillin on his head between his eyes. Wishing to raise his head, he sees the supernal Holy Name adhering to and inscribed upon his head, with straps hanging from either side over his heart. Behold, he is gazing upon the glory of His Lord![27]

"He extends his hands—and sees the other arm bound with the knot of the Holy Name; he draws back his hand, gazing upon the glory of his Lord.[28]

"He enwraps himself in a wrap of *mitsvah*, in the four corners of his garment. 'Four kings go forth toward four'—true witnesses of the King, hanging from four corners, 'hanging from them like grapes in a cluster.' Just as a cluster is one, with many grapes hanging on either side, so this *mitsvah* is one, with many grapes hanging from it, with skins and branches.[29]

"'Bound with them are seven runners'—seven windings of blue that must be wound around each one, or increasing up to thirteen. Whoever makes many should make no more than that; whoever makes few should make no less than seven.[30]

"It has been taught: This blue is mystery of King David, and the thread of Abraham, who rendered his descendants

worthy of it. What is meant by תכלת (*tekhelet*), blue? תכלית (*Takhlit*), Consummation, of all."[31]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "It is called Throne of Glory."[32]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Seven windings—for She is seventh of all, surely, since She is blessed by six others through Righteous One. And if thirteen—as has been established: with thirteen attributes of Compassion. She is the opening to all of them.[33]

"She is one thread, distinguished by Her colors; and Her color issues from a certain fish swimming in the Sea of כנרת (*Kinneret*). *Kinneret* is named for Her. So there was כנור (*kinnor*), a harp, suspended above David's bed—since She is David, surely! The harp of David plays by itself for the supernal King; so its colors rise to heaven, and from heaven to the Throne.[34]

"Here is written מצוה (*mitsvah*), commandment—as is said: מצות המלך (*mitsvat ha-melekh*), *the king's command* (2 Kings 18:36); *Why do you disobey* *mitsvat ha-melekh*, *the king's command?* (Esther 3:3); *for* *mitsvat ha-melekh*, *the king's command* (Nehemiah 11:23). And it has been taught: Foundation and root adorn Kingdom as one. This is the remembrance and opening of all other crowns, as is written: *Open for me the gates of righteousness* (Psalms 118:19), and similarly, *This is the gate to* *YHVH* (ibid., 20). Thus it is written *You will see it and remember all of* *YHVH's commandments* (Numbers 15:39)—to include in this all the other crowns. So, they are 'bearing witness, not staying in their places,' for She is *mitsvah*.[35]

"It has been taught: 'Implements of *mitsvah* may be thrown away.' Now, you might say, 'But *lulav*, willow, etc.!' However, implements of holiness—because they are inscribed with the writing of the Holy Name."[36]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Those threads—displaying how they are suspended from here and from there, in the four directions of the world, from this place. She rules over all in the mystery of לב (*lev*), heart, being the heart of this whole

world and heart of those above, suspended from the supernal heart—and all is in the לב (*lev*), heart, emerging from supernal Wisdom."[37]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "The measure of this and the length of this have been stated in the Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar."[38]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "The blessed Holy One said, 'Whoever wishes to walk in awe of Me should follow this heart and the eyes above it.' Who are the eyes? As is said: *The eyes of YHVH are upon the righteous* (Psalms 34:16). But as for you, *You will not stray after your heart and after your eyes* (Numbers 15:39). Why? [176a] Because *you go whoring after them* (ibid.)."[39]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Why is the exodus from Egypt mentioned here, as is written: *who brought you out of the land of Egypt* (Numbers 15:41)? Well, because when they went out of Egypt, they entered this share, and by this the blessed Holy One slew the slaying of Egypt. So in its place it is mentioned, and in its place He admonished them about this. What is meant by 'in its place'? That this *mitsvah* is its place."[40]

Rabbi Yeisa taught: "It is written: *As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt*, [*I will show him wonders*] (Micah 7:15). *As in the days*—the verse should read *as in the day*, since they came out of Egypt at once and did not tarry. However, 'as in those supernal days' by which Assembly of Israel is blessed; so does the blessed Holy One intend to bring forth Israel from exile. Of then is written *You will say on that day, 'Praise YHVH, proclaim His name. … Sing to YHVH, for He has done gloriously; this is known in all the world!'* (Isaiah 12:4–5). What is meant by מודעת זאת (*muda'at zot*), *this is known*? That now *zot, this*, is known by a wrap of *mitsvah*; *zot* is known by Her various ways—but at that time *zot* will be known by the blessed Holy One performing signs and miracles in the world. Of then is written *On that day YHVH will be one and His Name one* (Zechariah 14:9)."[41]

פרשת קרח

Parashat Qoraḥ

“KORAH” (NUMBERS 16:1–18:32)

Rabbi Abba opened, *“More desirable than gold, than abundant pure gold; sweeter than honey and drippings of the comb* (Psalms 19:11). How sublime are words of Torah, how precious are words of Torah! They are desired above, desired by all, for they comprise the Holy Name. Whoever engages in Torah engages in the Holy Name and is saved from all—saved in this world and saved in the world that is coming.[1]

“Come and see: Whoever engages in Torah grasps the Tree of Life. Grasping this, he grasps all, as is written: *A tree of life is she to those who grasp her* (Proverbs 3:18).”[2]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Whoever engages in Torah gains freedom from all—freedom from death, as we have said—since freedom settles upon him, adhering to him.

“If Israel kept the Torah, they would be delivered from all and not find themselves in exile. What is written? חרות (*Ḥarut*), *Engraved, upon the tablets* (Exodus 32:16)—do not read חרות (*ḥarut*), *engraved*, but rather חירות (*ḥeirut*), *freedom*, and this *freedom* has already been established.[3]

“Within Torah is power of the right, as is said: *from His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2), and left is included in right. Whoever makes right left, and left right, is as if he destroys the world.[4]

“Come and see: Aaron is right; Levites are left. Korah sought to change right into left, so he was punished.

Furthermore, he possessed the evil tongue, and he was punished entirely."[5]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Left is always included in right. Korah sought to change the arrangement of above and below, so he was eliminated from above and below.[6]

"Korah took (Numbers 16:1). What is meant by *took*? He took evil counsel for himself. If anyone chases after something that is not his, it escapes him; and what is more, he loses what he has. Korah pursued that which was not his; he lost his own without attaining the other.[7]

"Korah engaged in dispute. What is meant by 'dispute'? Division—division of above and below. Whoever seeks to divide the arrangement above will be eliminated from all worlds. Dispute—quarreling with peace. Whoever quarrels with peace quarrels with the Holy Name, [176b] since the Holy Name is called Peace.[8]

"Come and see: The world exists only by peace. When the blessed Holy One created the world, it could not endure until peace came and settled upon all. What is it? Sabbath, which is peace of those above and below. Then the world endured. And whoever quarrels with it will be eliminated from the world.[9]

"Zelophehad quarreled with Sabbath, for he was *gathering trees* (Numbers 15:32). Who are those *trees*? Other trees, as we have mentioned, who are mundane entities; and the mundane does not dwell in holiness. From here on, mundane matters are forbidden on Sabbath. He surely quarreled with peace of the world."[10]

Rabbi Yose said, "It is written: *Great peace have they who love Your Torah* (Psalms 119:165). Torah is peace, as is written: *and all her paths are peace* (Proverbs 3:17). Korah came to damage peace above and below, so he was eliminated from all, from above and below."[11]

They rose up before Moses, together with two hundred fifty men of the Children of Israel, chieftains of the community,

persons called to the assembly, men of renown (Numbers 16:2). This verse has been established by the Companions. Rabbi Shim'on said, "קריאי מועד (*Qeri'ei mo'ed*), *Persons called to the assembly*—written קראי (*qeri'ei*), *persons called to*, missing a י (*yod*); why? Well so it is: The kingdom on earth resembles the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the mystery: All those supernal crowns, with which the Holy Name is united, are summoned from a place called *holiness*, as is written: מקראי (*miqra'ei*), *called from, holiness* (Leviticus 23:4). When? At the time when *mo'ed, festival*, is present in the world. Just as those supernal crowns are summoned from higher *holiness*, so lower *holiness* summons its forces to crown them.[12]

"Higher *holiness* is known; lower *holiness* is Wisdom of Solomon. Similarly, She summons all Her forces, and those forces are all summoned to be crowned with this *holiness* when *mo'ed, festival*, prevails in the world.[13]

"Just as Her forces stand above, so chieftains stand in their pattern below; and therefore they are called *qeri'ei mo'ed, persons called from mo'ed*. Since they are below—קראי (*qeri'ei*), *persons called from, mo'ed*, spelled deficiently, corresponding to the pattern above. Yet they are in exceeding wholeness.[14]

"Men of שם (*shem*), *name*, surely, and not *men of YHVH*. This is the mystery of *If he pierces the Name, he shall be put to death* (Leviticus 24:16), as we have established. So they are called here *men of name*; since they proceed on the side of *Gevurah*, they are *men of name*—look, their praise is high! But they took for themselves and banded together in dispute.[15]

"Come morning, YHVH will make known who is His and who is holy, and will bring him close to Himself (Numbers 16:5). Why *morning*, and why *holy* and not *pure*? Well, they come from the side of *pure*, and the priest is *holy*. Moses said, *'Come morning*, since then the crown of the priest is

aroused in the world. If you are priests, here is *morning*—perform the service of *morning*. Then, *YHVH will make known who is His and who is holy. Who is His*—unspecified, namely the Levite. *And who is holy*—the priest. Then, *He will bring him close to Himself*. The only one who can discern the matter is *morning*. If you are destined to remain on the side of *Din* (Judgment), *morning* will not tolerate you, for that is not its time. And if you are destined to remain on the side of *Ḥesed* (Love), that is surely its time; and you will remain with it, and it will accept you.'[16]

"How? By קטרת (*qetoret*), incense—for incense requires a best man, so that all לאתקטרא (*le-itqattera*), may be bound together, by him and joined. Who is the best man? The priest. Thus, *the man whom YHVH chooses, he is the holy one* (Numbers 16:7)—not *the pure one*. They are two rungs: *holy* and *pure*. The priest is *holy*, the Levite is *pure*. Thus it is written *he is the holy one*."[17]

They fell on their faces and said, "אל אלהי הרוחות (*El Elohei ha-ruḥot*), *El, God of the spirits, for all flesh!*" (Numbers 16:22).[18]

Come and see: Moses and Aaron surrendered themselves to death. How so? Because it is written *They fell on their faces and said, "El, God of* הרוחות (*ha-ruḥot*), *the spirits*"—רוחת (*ruḥot*), missing a ו (*vav*), since it is the Tree of Death, and falling on the face is always to that place. Thus, *El, God of El*—as is written: *El, God, rages every day* (Psalms 7:12).[19]

God of the spirits—for it is the place of souls of the world, where all souls ascend and whence they come.[20]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, "*Listen, you sages, to my words; and you who know, hearken to me* (Job 34:2). This verse was spoken by Elihu. Come and see what is written: *Against his three companions his anger flared because they had not found a reply…* (ibid. 32:3)—for they spoke words, yet Job was not consoled by them. From here we learn that

one who comes to comfort a mourner should arrange his words ahead of time, [177a] for Job's friends spoke words of truth, but not to console him. This requires words that he will acknowledge truthfully, and then he will accept upon himself the judgment from above and acknowledge the Holy King. What is written? *Elihu waited out Job's words* (ibid., 4)—so afterward [Job] acknowledged the blessed Holy One and accepted upon himself the judgment of heaven.[21]

"Come and see: It is written: *Therefore, men of understanding, listen to me: far be from God any wickedness, from Shaddai any wrong* (Job 34:10). *Therefore, men of understanding*—complete in every way, knowing how to discern matters. *Far be from* מאל (*me-El*), *from God, any wickedness*—as is written: ואל (*Ve-El*), *And God, rages every day* (Psalms 7:12). *From Shaddai any wrong*—this one close to that one. As they have already established: אל שדי (*El Shaddai*).[22]

"כי פועל אדם ישלם לו (*Ki fo'al adam yeshallem lo*), *For a human's acts He repays him* (Job 34:11). Look, a person walks about in this world, performing his acts and sinning before his Lord; that very act impends over him, to repay him with Judgment, as is written: *Ki fo'al adam yeshallem lo, For a human's act repays him*—that very act *repays him*.[23]

"Nevertheless, *If he sets his heart on Him*—once a person sets his heart and will to return to his Lord, *his spirit and soul He gathers to Him* (Job 34:14), to be bound in the Bundle of Life. He does not abandon his soul outside, to succumb to another judgment."[24]

Rabbi Yose said, "This utterance is another mystery among concealed judgments of the blessed Holy One. *For a human's act, He repays him*—to be tried in judgment, according to the deeds that a person does in this world. He raises him to be judged according to his deeds, and he is eliminated from the world.[25]

"What is written afterward? מי פקד עליו ארצה (*Mi faqad alav artsah*), *Who assigned the earth to Him, and placed the*

whole world in His charge? (Job 34:13). *Mi faqad alav artsah, Whom did He assign for him on earth?* His brother, who is close to him. *And set up the whole world?* For he builds his household and erects a structure of the world, a restoration and habitation.[26]

"What is written next? *If he sets his heart on him*—this person who has been assigned to build a structure must focus his heart and will on that dead one. From here we learn that if a person copulates with that woman because of her beauty and his lust for her, this structure of the world is not built, since he did not focus will and heart on the dead one.[27]

"Therefore it is written: *If he sets his heart on him*—focusing on him with aspiration of the heart—then, *his spirit and soul He gathers to him*, drawn toward him, to be built up in this world.[28]

"What is written next? *All flesh will expire together, and the human return to dust* (Job 34:15). *All flesh will expire together*—that body will decay in the dust along with all that flesh. And now, *the human will return to dust*—renewal of the structure as before; returning to the dust of another body's structure, as it was originally.[29]

"Therefore, spirit and soul are in the hands of the blessed Holy One, who has compassion on human beings, so that they will not be eliminated from this world nor from the other world. Thus, *El, God of the spirits, for all flesh*."[30]

Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire-pan and place fire upon it" (Numbers 17:11).[31]

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, *"A king's wrath is messengers of death, but a wise man can assuage it* (Proverbs 16:14). How vigilantly should people refrain from sinning and guard their actions! For every single day, deeds mount the scales and are examined above and recorded before Him. So a person should beware of his sins, for the world is

frequently judged, and consequently wrath arises before the King and Judgment is aroused—as is written: *A king's wrath is messengers of death*.[32]

"But a wise man can assuage it. When masters of Judgment loom over the world and wrath impends, if there is a virtuous person in the generation who is inscribed above, then the blessed Holy One gazes upon him and wrath subsides.

"This may be compared to a king who was angry with his servants and summoned an officer to punish them. Meanwhile, the king's intimate friend came in and stood before him; as soon as the king saw him, his face shone. That friend of the king began to converse with him, and the king was delighted. Afterward when the officer arrived, he saw the king's face beaming. Then that friend pleaded to the king on behalf of his servants and won their pardon. Thus, *but a wise man can assuage it*.

"Here, too, when Moses saw wrath [177b] impending, immediately *Moses said to Aaron*—for he is the intimate friend of *Matronita*, and קטרת (*qetoret*), incense, ascends only through his hands, since he increases peace in the world and binds the bond of faith.[33]

"*Qetoret*, incense, as they have already established—joy of above and below, bond of faith, removal of wrath, as is written: *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9). Thus, *but a wise man can assuage it*—cleansing and purging that wrath, and compassion is stirred."[34]

Rabbi El'azar said, *"Do not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be cut off from the midst of the Levites* (Numbers 4:18), for they are the stock and root of the Levites. *This shall you do for them, that they live and not die* (ibid., 19)—for the priest must arrange them; since even though they are near holiness, they must enter only as arranged by the priest, who knows a certain sign indicating how far they may approach and no farther. When he covers

the holy vessels, then another covering settles, and they are forbidden to approach and see; for anything secretly silent does not pertain to them, but rather to the priests. Consequently, [the priest's] matters and actions are mysterious, whereas the Levites lift their voices.[35]

"Thus, priests in secret silence—and wine is forbidden to them, since wine is for raising the voice. So the Levites were entrusted to Judgment—since Judgment is revealed, to publicize the matter. But all matters of the priest are in mystery and secret silence, not revealed.[36]

"The perfect mnemonic: 'Let the left thrust away and let the right draw near.' Since the right draws near, when judgments prevail in the world from the side of the left, 'let the right draw near.' How? With incense, which is secretly silent, in refined mystery, innermost of all.[37]

"Come and see: When this other altar begins to flare in arousal because there are no virtuous people, the inner altar is aroused toward it and stands facing it, and judgments subside. So it stands facing the other, and Judgment disappears."[38]

Rabbi El'azar said, "When the sons of Kohath carry the most sacred objects, the priest comes and covers everything before they approach to carry, and they never see what they are carrying; rather, all is covered from their sight. Most of the covering of the sanctuary's vessels is blue, since blue has already been established and discussed. After everything is covered, the sons of Kohath, who carry, approach; and they approach only those poles protruding, as is written: *Aaron and his sons shall finish covering the sacred objects, and afterward the sons of Kohath shall come to carry* (Numbers 4:15).[39]

"So incense—which is innermost—and all that is secret are entrusted to the priest. Therefore, *Aaron took as Moses had spoken, and he ran into the midst of the assembly, and he put in incense*—which is innermost, secret of the priest; thereby, *he atoned for the people. And he stood between*

the dead and the living—between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death; thereby the right drew them near one another, *and the plague was halted* (Numbers 17:12–13).[40]

"Happy is the share of the priest, who has power above and has power below, and stimulates peace above and below! Left always serves right, as is written: *They will be joined with you and serve you* (Numbers 18:2); right and left appear in the sanctuary."[41]

Rabbi El'azar was standing before his father, Rabbi Shim'on. He said to him, "It is written: *Enjoy life with a woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life* (Ecclesiastes 9:9)."[42]

He replied, "Come and see: *Enjoy life with a woman whom you love*—this is a mystery, for a person should fuse *life* with this place. One doesn't go without the other. A person should include the quality of day with night, and the quality of night with day; this is *Enjoy life with a woman whom you love*. Why? *For that is your share in life* (Ecclesiastes 9:9), since *life* settles only upon this.[43]

"And in your toil that you toil under the sun (ibid.)—as is said: *In all your ways know Him, and He will smooth your paths* (Proverbs 3:6).[44]

"Come and see: All the words of King Solomon are sealed within wisdom, yet by these verses it seems that the lash has been untied! What is written next? *All that your hand finds to do with your power, do; for there is no doing or reckoning* [*or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, where you are going*] (Ecclesiastes 9:10). This verse should be examined. *All that your hand finds to do with your power, do*—now, did Solomon, [178a] who possessed supernal wisdom more than all inhabitants of the world, say this? Well, all of King Solomon's words were spoken according to the mystery of wisdom.[45]

"Come and see: *All that your hand finds to do with your power, do*—this means that a person should include left

within right, and everything that he does should be included only in the right. *All that your hand finds*—the left. *To do with your power*—the right, as is said: *Your right hand, O YHVH, glorious in power* (Exodus 15:6). Once a person is careful that all his actions are on the right side, and that he includes left within right, then the blessed Holy One dwells within him in this world—and will gather him to Himself for that world that is coming.[46]

"A person should not say, 'In the time to come, in that world, then I will plead for mercy before the King and repent before Him.' *For there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol*, after a person departs from this world. Rather, if a person wishes that the Holy King will illumine him in that world and grant him a share in the world that is coming, he should strive in this world to include his actions in the right, and all his deeds should be for the sake of the blessed Holy One. For afterward, when he is gathered in from this world to be judged in strict judgment—in the punishment of Hell—there is no counsel, *wisdom*, or understanding, by which to be saved from judgment.[47]

"Alternatively, *For there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol*. In Hell there are habitations upon habitations. The lower level is Sheol; the level lower than that is Avadon, adjacent to one another. Whoever descends to Sheol is punished, and from there he squeals and ascends, as is written: *He brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6). But if he descends to Avadon, he never ascends again.[48]

"Whoever possesses a good deed, or is a master of reckoning—as we have already established: Every single night, before he lies down and before he sleeps, a person should make a reckoning of the actions that he did that whole day and repent for them, asking for mercy concerning them. Why at that time? Because then the Tree of Death prevails in the world, and all inhabitants of the

world taste a taste of death; so at that time one should make a reckoning of his actions, confessing over them, since this is the time of death. These are called ‘masters of reckoning.’[49]

“And whoever engages in *knowledge and wisdom*, to know his Lord—when he is conveyed to depart [from this world] and to gaze upon the wicked who are being tormented in Hell and on the level of Sheol, all of them screaming from those levels, he will not remain there nor be among them.

“So, *there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol*. He will be situated only high above, in a place of countless lights and lamps, of countless raptures, where the blessed Holy One comes to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Happy is the share of the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming! Of them is written *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14).”[50]

ועבד הלוי הוא (*Ve-avad ha-levi hu*), *The Levite, he alone, will serve, at the Tent of Meeting* (Numbers 18:23).

Rabbi Abba opened, *“He who is enthroned above the vault of the earth, and its inhabitants seem like grasshoppers* (Isaiah 40:22). Come and see: When the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, an impulse arose in His will; and He created it through Torah, by which it was consummated, as is written: *When He founded the heavens, I was there*… (Proverbs 8:27), and similarly: *I was by Him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling* (ibid., 30)—as has been established: do not read אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*, but rather אומן (*umman*), *an artisan*.[51]

“When He came to create Adam—as has been explained: Torah said, ‘Is it for nothing that You are called *slow to anger and abounding in love* (Exodus 34:6)?’ When

Adam emerged into the world, the radiance of his face spanned above and below, and all creatures feared him, as has been established.[52]

"Come and see: The world did not endure nor was it perfected until the moment when Adam emerged in total perfection and the day was sanctified and a holy throne was prepared for the King. Then those above and below were consummated, and joy pervaded all worlds.[53]

"At the moment when the day was about to be sanctified, spirits of the demons emerged, for their bodies to be created; but the day was sanctified without their being created, and the world remained defective in its work, as it were, [178b] and lacking. Once the worlds were sanctified and Israel was completed in its rungs, with Levites on the left, then that defect of the world on the left was rectified.[54]

"Therefore the Levites must be purified, so that all may be included in the right and world will not be defective. Thus it is written *Ve-avad ha-levi hu, The Levite will serve, he*—*he* completes the left side; *he* rectifies the defect of the world. And even that side of the north, which remained lacking when the blessed Holy One created the world—the Levite, with the ark, completes all. What is meant by 'with the ark'? By the load of the Dwelling that they carried, that whole defect was rectified. That which is above, on the left, was included in the right.[55]

"Furthermore, *hu, he*—the Ancient One. If Judgment did not exist in the world, people would not know supernal faith, nor engage in Torah, and commandments of Torah would not be fulfilled. The complete service existing in the world for the Holy King—who actualizes it? You must say, 'The Levite.'[56]

"Furthermore, *Ve-avad ha-levi hu, The Levite will serve, he* —as is said: כי יהוה הוא האלהים (*ki YHVH hu ha-Elohim*), *that YHVH, He is Elohim* (Deuteronomy 4:35). *Hu, he*, perfects consummation, so that all becomes one. *Hu, he*, is extended toward

Assembly of Israel, as is said: *his left hand beneath my head* (Song of Songs 2:6)—to join coupling as one. Who arouses love? You must admit, '*Hu*, *he*.'[57]

"Furthermore, *hu*, *he*—as is said: הוּא (*Hu*), *He, made us, and not we ourselves* (Psalms 100:3).[58]

"Thus, *hu* below, *hu* above; *hu* revealed, *hu* concealed. *Hu ha-Elohim*, *He is Elohim*, surely!"[59]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "The blessed Holy One will one day illumine the moon to be as bright as the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, as is written: *The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days* (Isaiah 30:26). And it is written: *Never again will your sun set, and your moon will not be withdrawn*… (Isaiah 60:20); and similarly: *No longer will you need the sun for light by day*, [*nor the shining of the moon for radiance, for YHVH will be your light everlasting, and Your God will be your glory*] (ibid., 19)."[60] [179b]

פרשת חקת

Parashat Ḥuqqat

“STATUTE” (NUMBERS 19:1–22:1)

Rabbi Yose opened, *“And this is the Torah that Moses set before the Children of Israel* (Deuteronomy 4:44). Come and see: The words of Torah are holy, sublime, and sweet, as has been said; for it is written: *More desirable than gold, than abundant pure gold; sweeter than honey…* (Psalms 19:11). Whoever engages in Torah is as if he stands every day at Mount Sinai, receiving the Torah, as is written: *This day you have become a people* [*to YHVH your God*] (Deuteronomy 27:9). This has already been established by the Companions.[1]

“It is written here: וזאת (*Ve-zot*), *And this, is the Torah*, and it is written זאת (*Zot*), *This, is the statute of the Torah* (Numbers 19:2). What is the difference between one and the other? Well, it is a sublime mystery, and we have learned as follows: *Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah*—to display all in single union, merging Assembly of Israel with the blessed Holy One, so that all is one. Thus, *Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah*. Why the addition of ו (*vav*), *and*? Well, this has been said: to show that all is one, all is inseparable.[2]

“*Ve-zot, And this*—general and particular as one, male and female. Thus, *Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah*, surely! But *Zot, This*—without the additional *vav*—*is the statute of the Torah*, surely, and not *the Torah*; judgment of Torah, decree of Torah.[3]

“Come and see: *Zot, This, is what regards the Levites* (Numbers 8:24)—not *ve-zot, and this*, since they derive from

the side of harsh Judgment, not from the side of Compassion."[4]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "But it is written: *Ve-zot, And this, shall you do for them, that they live* (Numbers 4:19), which is said about the Levites; yet you say '*Zot, this*, and not *ve-zot, and this*.'"[5]

He replied, "Certainly so, as proven by the verse! If someone is holding deadly poison and does not blend into it an elixir of life, he will surely die. So, *Ve-zot, And this, shall you do for them, that they live and not die*—since an elixir of life is blended with *zot, this, they will live and not die*. Surely, *ve-zot, and this*, is required, not *zot, this*![6]

"Consequently, *Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah*—really in single union, complete union, totality of male and female: ו ה (*vav, he*). *Zot, This*—ה (*he*) alone; so, *Zot, This, is the statute of the Torah*."[7]

Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi El'azar, Rabbi Abba, and Rabbi Yitsḥak were in the house of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir. Rabbi Pinḥas said to Rabbi Shim'on, "I beg of you—you whose words are established above, and whose words are openly revealed, which is not permitted to anyone else—utter a new word about this portion."[8]

He asked, "Which one is it?"

He replied, *"This is the statute of the Torah* (Numbers 19:2)."[9]

He said, "Let the other Companions speak!" [180a]

He said to Rabbi El'azar, "My son, El'azar, stand erect and twirl the reason of levirate marriage and removing the shoe! Utter a word about this portion, and the Companions will speak after you."[10]

Rabbi El'azar rose. He opened, saying, *"And this was formerly done in Israel in cases of redemption or exchange: to validate any matter, one man would remove his sandal and give it to the other. Such was the confirmation in Israel* (Ruth 4:7). This verse should be examined. If they were

merely making an agreement, and later generations abolished it—why? And if it wasn't merely an agreement, but rather according to the law of Torah, why did they abolish it? Surely, whoever abolishes anything in the Torah is as if he destroys the whole world![11]

"Well, it was certainly according to the law of Torah, and the deed was performed in sublime mystery. Because the ancients were virtuous and pious, the matter was revealed among them; but once the wicked increased in the world, this practice was transformed, in order to conceal matters of sublime mystery. This has already been established.[12]

"YHVH said to Moses, 'Remove your sandals from your feet…' (Exodus 3:5). Now, why is a shoe mentioned here? Well, as has been said, He commanded him concerning his wife—to separate from her and couple with another woman, bathed in supernal radiance. And that shoe He established for him in another place, removing it from this world and establishing it in another world.[13]

"Therefore, whatever a dead person gives to someone is beneficial; but if he takes articles from the house, it is harmful—such as his sandal. Why? Because he is removing his feet from this world, gathering and withdrawing them to another world, the place where death prevails—as is written: *How lovely are your feet in sandals, O nobleman's daughter!* (Song of Songs 7:2). Mystery of the matter is among the Companions.[14]

"This is the case when a dead person takes them. But when a living person removes his shoe and gives it to someone else in order to validate a transaction, he is acting according to the decree on high.[15]

"The shoe of *ḥalitsah* corresponds to another pattern, and all is one place. Come and see: When a dead man departs from the world without children, this *nobleman's daughter* does not gather him in, and he goes wandering through the world, finding no place. The blessed Holy One has mercy on

him, so that he may return and be restored by other dust, as is written: *The human will return to dust* (Job 34:15), as has been established.[16]

"If that redeemer is not willing to sustain his brother's existence in this world, a shoe must be tied to his foot, and that woman unties it and accepts that shoe. Why? Well, because that shoe is for the sake of the dead man, and it is placed on the foot of his living brother, and the woman accepts that shoe to show that the dead one returns among the living through this act.[17]

"This is the opposite of the shoe that the dead one takes from the living, since now this shoe is taken by the living from the dead. It must be a shoe that the dead one never walked in during his lifetime. The woman takes it to show that the Woman—Her Husband's Crown—takes him and accepts him.[18]

"She must strike that shoe on the ground to show that the body of that dead one will calm down, and that the blessed Holy One—now or afterward—will have mercy on him and receive him into the other world.[19]

"Furthermore, striking of that shoe by the woman's hand—to show that the dead one is not being rebuilt through other dust of this world, but will now return to his dust from which he originally came. Then that woman is permitted to generate seed with another, as has been established.[20]

"Come and see: Therefore, whoever wishes to validate a transaction takes his shoe and gives it to his associate, thereby validating the covenant of the *nobleman's daughter. And this was formerly done in Israel* [*in cases of redemption or exchange*…]. What is meant by וזאת (*ve-zot*), *and this*? Completely perfect validation.[21]

"*Formerly done in Israel*—when they were humble and holy.[22]

"*To validate* כל דבר (*kol davar*), *any matter*—really, for this is enduring validation.[23]

“Then, *Ve-zot*, *And this, was the confirmation in Israel*—surely. For you should not say that it was some other type of agreement, but rather supernal enduring validation, so that their actions would endure on high.[24]

“When the wicked increased in the world, the matter was concealed by a different manner: by כנפא (*kanpa*), the flap, of a garment. This is a garment for adornment, and mystery of the matter is: *He shall not uncover* כנף אביו (*kenaph aviv*), *his father’s skirt* (Deuteronomy 23:1).[25] [180b]

“זאת (*Zot*), *This, is the statute of the Torah. Zot, This*—sign of the covenant that has not been uncovered. When it is uncovered, all is called זה (*zeh*), this. From the Female, one enters the Male; so, שמור (*shamor*), *keep* (Deuteronomy 5:12), and זכור (*zakhor*), *remember* (Exodus 20:8), join as one.[26]

“חקת (*Ḥuqqat*), *the statute of, the Torah*—the verse should read חק (*ḥoq*), *the rule of, the Torah*; why *ḥuqqat*? Well, *ḥuqqat*, surely, as we have explained! ה (*He*) was ד (*dalet*), as has already been said. But ת (*tav*) is ד (*dalet*) and נ (*nun*), joined as one. *Nun* has already been discussed.[27]

“Why is *nun* called so? Well, as is said: ולא תונו (*Ve-lo tonu*), *You shall not defraud, one another* (Leviticus 25:17). For now, Her face is beaming; yet She commits fraud against human beings—afterward striking like a snake, destroying and killing, *and she says*, ‘*I have done no wrong*’ (Proverbs 30:20). So She is called *Nun*, as has been mentioned.[28]

“ת (*Tav*)—all as one: ד (*dalet*), נ (*nun*). ד (*Dalet*), ר (*resh*); ה (*he*) and ד (*dalet*)—one matter. They are in Engraved Letters.[29]

“Come and see: חקת (*Ḥuqqat*), *statute*. All is one matter.[30]

“Speak to the Children of Israel, that they take you a perfect red cow (Numbers 19:2). This cow is intended for purification, to purge the impure. *A cow*—who receives from the left. Who is on the left? An ox, as is said: *the face of an ox on the left* (Ezekiel 1:10).[31]

“Red—red as a rose, as is written: *Like a rose among thorns* (Song of Songs 2:2). Red—decree of Judgment.[32]

“תמימה (*Temimah*), *perfect*. What is meant by *temimah*? As we have learned: שור תם (*shor tam*), an innocent ox, and מועד שור (*shor mu’ad*), a forewarned ox. *Shor tam*, an innocent ox—lenient Judgment. *Shor mu’ad*, a forewarned ox—harsh Judgment. Here, too, *temimah*, *perfect*—lenient Judgment, lower *Gevurah*; this is *temimah*. Upper *Gevurah*—harsh Judgment, which is the strong hand, mighty.[33]

“That has no blemish (Numbers 19:2)—as is said: *You are wholly beautiful, my love; there is no blemish in you* (Song of Songs 4:7).

“And on which no עול (*ol*), *yoke, has been put* (Numbers 19:2)—spelled עֹל (*ol*), as is said: *utterance of the man raised* עָל (*al*), *on high* (2 Samuel 23:1). Why? Because She is *consummation of the faithful of Israel* (ibid. 20:19), and He is not above Her but with Her. *And on which no* עול (*ol*), *yoke, has been put*—על (*al*), *above*, corresponding to what is written: *Virgin Israel* (Amos 5:2); *a virgin—no man had known her* (Genesis 24:16).[34]

“You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and he shall take it outside (Numbers 19:3). Its *mitsvah* is by the prefect, as has been established. Why him and not Aaron? Well, Aaron is the best man of *Matronita*.[35]

“Furthermore, Aaron does not come from the side of ‘pure,’ but rather from the side of ‘holy.’ And since this is intended for purification, it was not given to him.[36]

“Every element of this cow is in seven: ‘seven washings, etc.,’ as has already been said. Why? Because She is seven years of Sabbatical; She is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven; and all Her actions are in seven.[37]

“Come and see: Everything produced from this cow is in order to purify, not to sanctify. So although it was given to the prefect, he did not slaughter or burn it, so that no Judgment would appear on his side. All the more so, Aaron, who occupies a more perfect rung, and who must not appear or be present there.[38]

“As soon as this cow is turned into ashes, *cedarwood, hyssop, and crimson stuff* (Numbers 19:6) must be cast into her, and these have already been discussed.[39]

“A pure man shall gather [*the cow’s ashes*]—not *a holy* [*man*]—*and set them outside the camp in a pure place* (Numbers 19:9), for someone is called *pure* only after previously being in the aspect of impure.[40]

“Mystery of all: that which is written *for waters of* נדה (*niddah*), *defilement; it is* חטאת (*ḥattat*), *a sin offering* (Numbers 19:9). For all lower judgments and all those coming from the impure side—when She suckles from the Other Side and sits in Judgment, as is said: *full of blood, gorged with fat…* (Isaiah 34:6), they are aroused and rise and haunt the world. As soon as this act is performed below—with all this Judgment in the place of this cow, and casting upon her *cedarwood*, [181a] *hyssop*, etc.—their power is weakened, and wherever they prevail they are broken and enfeebled, and they flee from it, since this power of theirs appears to them like this. Then they no longer remain in a person, and he is purified.[41]

“So these are called *waters of defilement*—waters to purify, when the world dwells in Judgment and the impure side spreads through the world. Here are included all types of impurity and types of purity. Consequently, impurity and purity are a supernal principle of Torah, as the Companions have established.”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “El’azar, you have made it impossible for the Companions to utter a word here following you!”[42]

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, *“Letting loose springs in streams, among the mountains they go. They water all beasts of the field, wild asses slake their thirst* (Psalms 104:10–11). These verses were uttered by King David through the Holy Spirit, and they should be contemplated.[43]

“Come and see: When supernal Wisdom struck its engravings, even though it is concealed on all sides, there opened and flowed from it one river, filled with supernal gates. Like a fountain—a water spring—filling a large reservoir, from which flow rivers and streams in every direction; so here: through one slender channel, unknown, that gushing river flows forth; and from there springs and streams are conveyed, filled by it. As is written: *Letting loose springs in streams, among the mountains they go*—supernal holy rivers of pure balsam, all saturated as one by that flow of the supernal holy stream gushing forth.[44]

“Afterward, *They water all beasts of the field*, [*wild asses slake their thirst*]—*They water all beasts of* שדי (*sadai*), *the field*, corresponding to what is written: *and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads* (Genesis 2:10). These *four riverheads* are *beasts of sadai, the field*—totality of all those camps and all those legions comprised in them. שדי (*Sadai*), *the field*—do not read it שָׂדַי (*sadai*), *the field*, but rather שַׁדַּי (*Shaddai*), for he assumes and completes the Name from *Yesoda* (Foundation) of the World.[45]

“*Wild asses slake their thirst*—those of whom is written *The wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels* (Ezekiel 1:20). Who is *the living being*? Well, these *beasts of the field* are four, with each one facing in one direction of the world, and that one is called *the living being*; and there are *wheels* corresponding to each one, which move only by the spirit of that *living being* moving above them.[46]

“When these are saturated by that supernal flow, all other legions are saturated and satiated, embedded in their roots, intertwined with one another on well-known rungs. As is written: *Above them the birds of heaven dwell, from among the foliage* [*they send forth their voice*] (Psalms 104:12)—other supernal rungs.[47]

“After all this, *From the fruit of Your works, earth is sated* (Psalms 104:13), below, and all worlds rejoice and are

blessed. This occurs when blessings spread from the saturating flow of the stream, deepest of all.[48]

"But when the world dwells in Judgment, blessings are unable to descend upon the world. Then the Sanctuary is defiled, and many ravaging bands of stingers appear in the world, looming over human beings in numerous places. That spirit defiles them—like someone who dies and an impure spirit settles upon him; so, too, it settles upon anyone approaching him. As is written: *You hide Your face, and they panic. You increase their spirit, and they perish…* (Psalms 104:29).

"This verse—what does it indicate? Well, *You hide Your face, and they panic*—for they are not saturated, enabling blessings to appear in the worlds. *You increase their spirit*—arousing another spirit, unholy, from the left side; so an impure spirit settles upon human beings: upon those who die and whoever approaches them and upon other humans.[49]

"What is their remedy? That which is written: *and to their dust they return* (Psalms 104:29)—this *dust of the burnt purification offering* (Numbers 19:17), in order to be purified by it. This is the mystery of *'All comes from the dust* (Ecclesiastes 3:20)—even the globe of the sun.'[50]

"After they return to this dust in order to be purified by it, the impure spirit is eliminated; and another, holy spirit is aroused, settling in the world—as is written: *You send forth Your spirit, and they are created, and You renew the face of the earth* (Psalms 104:30). יִבָּרְאוּן (*Yibbare'un*), *They are created*—they are healed by the sublime remedy of another spirit.[51]

"And You renew the face of the earth—for look, the Woman is purified for Her Husband, and renewal of the moon occurs, and all worlds are blessed![52]

"Happy is the share of Israel, for the blessed Holy One has given them counsel for all, remedy for all, so that they may attain life in the world that is coming, and become pure

in this world, holy in this world, holy for the world that is coming! Of them is written *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure* (Ezekiel 36:25)."[53] [181b]

The Children of Israel, the whole community, came to the Desert of Zin… (Numbers 20:1).[54]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Why is the Section of the Cow adjacent to the death of Miriam? This has already been established. However, since Judgment was executed upon this cow to purge the impure, Judgment was executed upon Miriam and she departed from the world. As soon as Miriam departed, the well that accompanied Israel through the desert departed, and the Well departed in every way."[55]

Rabbi Abba said, "It is written: *And you, O son of man, raise a lament for Virgin Israel*. For Her alone? No, but because all was broken on account of Her. The right was broken after Her, since it draws Her to the body; and the body was darkened on account of Her. This is the mystery that is written: *Save Your right hand!* (Psalms 60:7). Regarding the body, as is written: *The heavens are clothed in blackness* (Isaiah 50:3), since the sun was darkened because of Her.[56]

"Corresponding to this, *Miriam died there, and was buried there. And the community had no water* (Numbers 20:1–2), for the Well above and below departed. Afterward, the right was broken, as is written: *Let Aaron be gathered to his kin…* (Numbers 20:24). Then, the sun was darkened, as is written: *Die on the mountain* (Deuteronomy 32:50), and similarly, *Be gathered to your kin—you, too, as* [*Aaron your brother*] *was gathered* (Numbers 27:13). Thus the right arm was broken, and the body, which is the sun, was darkened.[57]

"Come and see: There was never a generation in the world like that in which Moses existed along with Aaron and Miriam. If you say, 'In the days of Solomon, similarly,' not so!

For in the days of Solomon, the moon ruled and the sun was gathered in; whereas in the days of Moses, the moon was gathered in and the sun ruled.[58]

"There were three siblings: Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, as is said: *I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam* (Micah 6:4). Miriam is the moon; Moses, the sun; Aaron, the right arm; Hur, the left arm—and some say, Nahshon son of Amminadab.[59]

"First, the moon departed—Miriam died; the well departed. Afterward, the right arm was broken, which constantly draws the moon near in kinship, in joy. Thus it is written *Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took* [*a timbrel in her hand*] (Exodus 15:20)—*Aaron's sister*, surely, for he is the arm that draws her near the body in unity and kinship! Then, the sun was gathered in and darkened, as we have established, for it is written: *Be gathered to your kin—you, too*. Happy is the share of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who existed in the world![60]

"In the days of Solomon, the moon ruled in full array and was manifested in the world; Solomon was established in the wisdom of Her radiance, and he ruled the world. As the moon descended, due to his sins, She became defective day after day until She was located in the western corner—and nothing more—and one tribe was given to his son. Happy is the share of Moses the Prophet![61]

"It is written: *The sun rises and the sun sets…* (Ecclesiastes 1:5). This verse has been established; but *The sun rises*—when Israel came out of Egypt, for the sun shone, not the moon.[62]

"And to its place it strives; there it shines (ibid.). Look at what is written: *and the sun sets*—in the desert along with the others who died in the desert! Once the sun sets, where is it gathered in? *To its place*—in order to illumine the moon, as is written: *it strives; there it shines*. For although it is gathered in, *there it shines*, surely, since the moon

shines only from the light of the sun. This is the mystery that is written: *Here, you are about to lie with your fathers* [*and rise*] (Deuteronomy 31:16)—even though you will be gathered in, *here, you* endure, to illumine the moon.[63]

"So it is with Moses. And of him this verse is written: *What profit is there for a person in all his toil that he toils under the sun?* (Ecclesiastes 1:3). *What profit is there for a person?*—Joshua, who strove to give Israel possession of the land and did not succeed in completing the moon fittingly. For he toiled for Israel *under the sun*—under Moses.[64]

"Come and see: Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation! Because he labored and did not really take his place, but rather *under the sun*. He had no radiance of his own, only the light shining upon him. If so, what was his glory, since he failed to fulfill either one?[65]

"Wherever Solomon said *under the sun*, he was referring to his rung: *I have seen under the sun* (Ecclesiastes 5:12); *Further did I see under the sun* (ibid. 3:16); *I returned to see* [182a] *under the sun* (ibid. 9:11); and so with all of them. Regarding his own rung, he uttered mystery of the matter, surely!"[66]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Certainly, concerning one who takes deadly poison alone, it is written *in all his toil that he toils under the sun—under the sun*, surely! Who is *under the sun*? You must say, 'This is the moon.' If anyone grasps the moon without the sun, *his toil* is *under the sun*, surely! This is the original sin of the world. Thus, *What profit is there* לאדם (*la-adam*)*—for Adam*, [*in all his toil that he toils under the sun*]? And similarly for all those who come after him, who have sinned in this place.[67]

"Moving toward the south, circling toward the north (Ecclesiastes 1:6)—corresponding to what is written: *from His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). *His right hand* is *south; a fiery law* is *north*—one included in the other.[68]

“*Round and round goes the wind* (Ecclesiastes 1:6). This verse is difficult; it should read *Round and round goes the sun*! Well, what is this רוח (*ruaḥ*), *wind*? This is *under the sun*, called רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), the Holy Spirit. This *ruaḥ goes—goes around* these two sides to join the body. Thus it is written הרוח (*ha-ruaḥ*), *the wind*—that well-known one. As for השמש (*ha-shemesh*), *the sun* (Ecclesiastes 1:5)—unidentified, though the share of Israel is well known.[69]

“*And on its rounds the wind returns* (ibid., 6). Who are *its rounds*? The patriarchs, who are the holy Chariot. They are three, along with this *ruaḥ* joined to them—look, a complete Chariot! Of this *ruaḥ* is written *A stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone* (Psalms 118:22).[70]

“Consequently, all the words of King Solomon are sealed in wisdom, all deep within the holy palace. People do not contemplate them; they see his words like those of someone else. If so, what glory is there for King Solomon in his wisdom over other human beings? But surely, every single word of King Solomon is sealed in wisdom!”[71]

He opened, saying, “*Wisdom is good with an inheritance*, [*and an advantage to those who see the sun*] (Ecclesiastes 7:11). If this matter had not been revealed, I would not know what he was saying. *Wisdom is good—wisdom* that is *under the sun*, prepared as a throne for Him.[72]

“*Wisdom is good with an inheritance*—fine and beautiful with Israel, who are Her *inheritance* and share.[73]

“But more praiseworthy, *for those who see the sun*—for those who succeed in uniting with the sun and bonding with Him. For look, he grasps the Tree of Life! And whoever grasps Him grasps life of this world and life of the world that is coming.[74]

“This is what is written: *The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom keeps its possessors alive* (Ecclesiastes 7:12). What is meant by *the advantage of* דעת (*da’at*), *knowledge*?

Well, *Da'at* is the Tree of Life. What is its *advantage*? *Wisdom*, surely, for Torah issues from supernal Wisdom.[75]

"Furthermore, *Wisdom is good with inheritance. Wisdom is good*, surely, *with inheritance*—Righteous One of the World, who is light of the sun. For these rungs dwell as one, and this is their beauty. However, *and even better for those who see the sun*—for those who unite it with the sun, potency of all, praise of all.[76]

"This is *Da'at*, the Tree of Life. As we have already established: *Surely, without da'at, knowledge, a soul is not good* (Proverbs 19:2). Who is *a soul*? The soul of King David, which is the *wisdom* we have mentioned.[77]

"Therefore, *The advantage of da'at, knowledge, is wisdom*, for there the Tree is rooted and planted in all directions—and similarly, all those who grasp this Tree.[78]

"So King Solomon occupied only that rung of his, from where he discovered all, and he said, *Further did I see under the sun* (Ecclesiastes 3:16); *I returned to see under the sun* (ibid. 9:11); and so with all of them.[79]

"Happy are the righteous, who engage in Torah and know the ways of the Holy King and the sublime sealed treasures hidden in Torah! For it is written: *For the ways of YHVH are right;* [*the righteous walk in them, while transgressors stumble in them*] (Hosea 14:10)."

Let Aaron be gathered to his kin, for he shall not come [*into the land*….] (Numbers 20:24).[80]

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, *"I praise the dead, who have already died…* (Ecclesiastes 4:2). This verse has been discussed and established. Come and see: All the acts of the blessed Holy One accord with justice and truth. No one can object to Him or restrain His hand, saying, 'What are You doing?' He acts entirely according to His will.[81]

"*I praise* [182b] *the dead*. Now, is King Solomon praising the dead more than the living? Look, one is called

‘living’ only if he follows a path of truth in this world, as is said: *Benaiah son of Jehoiada, son of a living man* (2 Samuel 23:20), as has been established by the Companions. And a wicked person, who does not follow a path of truth, is called ‘dead.’ And he praises the dead more than the living?[82]

“But surely, all the words of King Solomon were spoken in wisdom, as has been said! *I praise the dead*—if nothing more were written, I would agree; but since it is written *who have already died*, another element appears, in wisdom. *Who have already died*—another time they departed from the world and were rectified in the dust, given the opportunity to return to worldly life in order to be mended. After such a person’s time is completed, he dies—surely he is more praiseworthy than others who die. If you say, ‘He is judged another time in that world’—look at what is written: *Distress does not arise twice* (Nahum 1:9)! All the more so, since he has already received punishment once and twice. Surely his place is prepared more gloriously than that of the living, who have not yet received punishment.[83]

“So it is written *I praise the dead who have already died—who have already died*, precisely! These are *living*, yet called *dead*. Why are they called *dead*? Because they have already tasted the taste of death; and although they exist in this world, they are *dead*, having returned from the dead. Furthermore, they are poised to rectify previous deeds, so they are called *dead*.[84]

“*More than the living, who are still alive* (Ecclesiastes 4:2)—who have not yet tasted the taste of death nor received their punishment, and they do not know if they are worthy of that world or not.[85]

“Come and see: The righteous who are worthy of being bound in the Bundle of Life are privileged to see the supernal glory of the Holy King, as is said: *to gaze upon the beauty of YHVH and to reflect in His palace* (Psalms 27:4). As for them, their abodes are finer and higher than the rungs

of all the holy angels; for neither those above or below are worthy of seeing such a lofty abode, as is written: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You* (Isaiah 64:3).[86]

"Those who are not as worthy as these have an abode below, according to their conduct. They are not privileged to ascend to that place and to see what those above see; they are stationed in Lower Eden, no further.[87]

"Now you might say, 'What is Lower Eden?' Well, this is the Eden called Lower Wisdom; it presides over the terrestrial Garden, and the watchfulness of this Eden is upon it, no further. These exist in this Garden, delighting from this Eden.[88]

"What is the difference between Lower Eden and Higher Eden? *Like the advantage of light over darkness* (Ecclesiastes 2:13). This Lower Eden is called עדנה (*ednah*), Delight—female. Higher Eden is called עדן (*eden*), Delight—male. Of it is written *No eye has seen, O God, but You*.[89]

"This Lower Eden is called Garden in relation to Higher Eden, and this Garden is called Eden in relation to the Lower Garden. Those who are located in the Lower Garden delight from this Eden above them on every Sabbath and every new moon, as is written: *From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath*, [*all flesh shall come to bow down before Me*] (Isaiah 66:23).[90]

"Concerning these, Solomon said, *more than the living, who are* עדנה (*adenah*), *still, alive*—for those [others] occupy a higher rung than these. Who are those? Those *who have already died* and received punishment twice. They are called *refined silver* that has entered fire once and twice—its dross expelled—now purified and cleansed.[91]

"And better than both is one who has not עדן (*aden*), *yet, been* (Ecclesiastes 4:3)—for that spirit exists above and delays descending to earth; for it maintains its existence and is not liable to punishment and obtains nourishment from that supernal sustenance [183a] high above.[92]

“Better than all of them—one who is not mentioned explicitly, not revealed, all of whose matters are in secrecy. This is a devoted virtuous one, who has kept the commandments of Torah and fulfilled them and engaged in Torah day and night. This one is joined to, and enjoys, a higher rung than all other humans, all of whom are scorched by his canopy.[93]

“Come and see: When the blessed Holy One said to Moses, *‘Let Aaron be gathered to his kin,’* his power was weakened, and he knew that his right arm was being broken, and his whole body trembled. As soon as He said, *Take Aaron and Eleazar his son* (Numbers 20:25), the blessed Holy One was saying, ‘Moses! Here, I am lending you another arm. *Strip Aaron of his garments and clothe Eleazar his son with them, and Aaron will be gathered up* (ibid., 26). Here, Eleazar will be by your side now in place of his father!’ Even so, he did not completely fill the place of his father, since the clouds of glory disappeared; and they returned only for the merit of Moses, not of Eleazar.[94]

“Moses did as YHVH had commanded, and they went up Mount Hor [*before the eyes of all the community*] (Numbers 20:27). Why *before the eyes of all the community*? Well, because Aaron was the most beloved of all the people, and they should not say that he was hidden away by Moses. Moses coaxed Aaron with words until they ascended the mountain; and all of Israel saw when Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and clothed Eleazar with them.[95]

“Why Moses and not Aaron? Well, Moses had clothed Aaron with them when he was elevated to the priesthood, as is written: *Moses clothed Aaron with his garments*. Now Moses removed what he had given him, and the blessed Holy One removed what He had given him. Both of them stripped Aaron completely—Moses removing the external, the blessed Holy One the internal. Until Moses enacted the removal, the blessed Holy One did not do so. Happy is the share of Moses![96]

“Happy is the share of the righteous, for the blessed Holy One desires their glory! The blessed Holy One prepared for Aaron a bed and a shining candelabrum. From his own he obtained—from the candelabrum that he used to kindle twice every day. Then the mouth of the cave was sealed, and they descended.”[97]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “The mouth of the cave was open, so that all of Israel could see Aaron deceased—with the lamp of the candelabrum burning before him, his bed emerging and entering, and a single cloud poised above it. Then Israel knew that Aaron had died, and they saw that the clouds of glory had disappeared and reappeared, as is written: *All the community saw that Aaron had expired, and* [*all the house of Israel*] *bewailed Aaron* [*thirty days*] (Numbers 20:29). This is why *all the house of Israel* bewailed Aaron—men, women, and children—for he was most beloved of all.”[98]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Why were these three lofty, holy siblings not buried in one place—their limbs scattered: one here, one there, and one somewhere else? Well, some say that each one died in a place where Israel was about to be endangered, in order to protect them, and so they were saved.[99]

“However, each one died fittingly: Miriam in Kadesh, between north and south; Aaron on the right side; Moses, fittingly. That mountain grasped this mountain of Aaron’s and absorbed the grave of Miriam, thereby embracing both sides. Therefore it is called הר העברים (*Har ha-Avarim*), Mount Abarim—of two sides; a mountain דמעבר (*de-ma’avar*), that spans, and connects this side and that.[100]

“Happy is the share of the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming! Even though they are in another, higher world, their merit endures in this world for generations upon generations. When Israel turns back yearningly to the blessed Holy One, if a decree has been issued against them, the blessed Holy One calls to the

righteous who are standing in His presence above, and informs them—and they nullify that decree, and the blessed Holy One has mercy on Israel. Happy are the righteous, of whom is written *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy your soul with radiancies and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11)."[101]

The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt [*to die in the desert*?]..." (Numbers 21:5). This section ascends elsewhere—with those Waters of Meribah of Moses of Aaron.[102]

Rabbi Yitsḥak opened, *"It happened on the third day,* [183b] *that Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royalty, and stood in the inner court of the king's palace*... (Esther 5:1). We have learned: The scroll of Esther was uttered in the Holy Spirit, and therefore it is written among the Writings. *It happened on the third day*—when the power of the body weakened, and she existed as spirit without body; then *Esther put on malkhut*.[103]

"What is *malkhut*? If you say, 'Glorious purple garments'—these are not called so. Rather, *Esther put on malkhut*—she was clothed in supernal holy *Malkhut*; surely she was clothed in the Holy Spirit.[104]

"Why did she attain this place? Because she guarded her mouth, so as not to mention anything, as is written: *Esther did not reveal her relatives or her people* (Esther 2:20). We have learned: Whoever guards his mouth and tongue is worthy of being clothed in the Holy Spirit; and whoever deviates his mouth to an evil word—surely that evil word overcomes him. If not, then plagues or leprosy, burning like a serpent, as has already been established.[105]

"The people spoke against God and against Moses—saying evil words. And in the Targum: *and they quarreled with Moses*.[106]

“Why העליתונו (*he’elitunu*), *did you bring us up* [*from Egypt*]?—they treated all faces equivalently. Therefore serpents came upon them, burning them like fire, and fire entered their mouths and they dropped dead.”[107]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Serpents came, their mouths hissing, biting—and they died. What is meant by מלחשן (*melaḥashan*), hissing? As is said: *If the snake bites with no* לחש (*laḥash*), *snake-charm* (Ecclesiastes 10:11). Fire flared from their mouths and they bit, spewing fire into them, and their innards were burned and they died. These matters ascend elsewhere.[108]

“From there בארה (*be’erah*), *to Be’er, which is* הבאר (*ha-be’er*), *the well*, [*of which YHVH said to Moses, “Gather the people, that I may give them water”*] (Numbers 21:16). Why is it written here בארה (*be’erah*), and afterward differently: באר (*be’er*)? Well, בארה (*be’erah*)—after waters are gathered into the sea, descending to those below. באר (*Be’er*)—when Isaac is filling it.[109]

“היא (*Hi*), *She, is the well*—spelled הוא (*hu*), *he*. This mystery resembles what is written: *The Levite will serve hu, he* (Numbers 18:23).”[110]

Rabbi Abba said, “Wherever it is written הוא (*hu*), *he*, and read as היא (*hi*), *she*—male and female as one, and supernal totality: ה (*he*), female; ו (*vav*), male; א (*alef*), totality of all, since *alef* abides in consummation.[111]

“Happy are Israel! Although below, they are grasped by the supernal totality of all. Therefore it is written: הוא (*Hu*), *He, made us*, ולא (*ve-lo*), *and not, we ourselves* (Psalms 100:3)—spelled with an *alef*, totality of *vav, he*, comprising all.”[112]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “The רוח (*ruaḥ*), wind, of water is רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), the Holy Spirit, blowing at first, as is said: *Blow upon my garden* (Song of Songs 4:16). Then, waters flow, filling all, as is written: *He lets His wind blow—waters flow* (Psalms 147:18); first, *He lets His wind blow*;

then, *waters flow*. As long as this wind does not blow, these waters do not flow.[113]

"What does this imply? That in everything, one must arouse by action or by word or by displaying something similar to action. Here, as long as the wind does not blow, waters do not flow toward that wind.[114]

"הוּא הבאר (*Hu ha-be'er*), *He is the well*—we read it as היא (*hi*), *she*. Why is it first בארה (*be'erah*), and now different: באר (*be'er*)? Well, at first, the female alone; and now that it says הוא (*hu*), *he*—totality of male and female is called באר (*be'er*), *well*. Where a male appears, even with a hundred females, we call everything masculine.[115]

"*Of which YHVH said to Moses, 'Gather the people, that I may give them water*'—because this well did not depart from them. Now you might say, 'How could everyone draw from it?' Well it issued into thirteen streams, overflowing and gushing in every direction. So, when Israel encamped and needed water, they would stand by it, singing a song. What did they sing? *'Rise up, O well!* (Numbers 21:17)—raise your waters, producing water for all, that they may be saturated by you.' So, too, they sang the praise of this well: *A well dug by princes*... (ibid., 18). They spoke a word of truth, and so it is.[116]

"From here we learn: Whoever wishes to arouse something above, whether by action or by word—if that action is not performed properly, or that word is not spoken fittingly, nothing is aroused. All inhabitants of the world go to synagogue to arouse something above, but few know how to do so. The blessed Holy One is near to all; but if they do not know how to call on Him, He is not near—as is written: *Near is YHVH to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth* (Psalms 145:18). What is meant by *in truth*? That they know a word of truth fittingly. And similarly with all.[117]

"Here, too, Israel spoke these words—words of truth—in order to arouse [184a] this well, providing water for

them; and until they uttered these words, it was not aroused.[118]

"Similarly, even those sorcerers of the world who conjure evil species—until they perform true actions toward them or utter words of truth in order to draw them in the manner they desire, [those species] are not aroused for them. Even if they speak other words all day long or engage in other acts, they can never attract or arouse them.[119]

"Come and see: It is written: *They called on the name of Baal from morning to noon, saying, 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no voice and none hearing* (1 Kings 18:26, 29). Why? First, because that Baal had no authority over this. Furthermore, their words were incorrect, since the blessed Holy One had erased them from their memory, as is written: *It is You who turned their heart backward* (ibid., 37). Happy are the righteous who know how to call upon their Lord fittingly!"[120]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Here I wish to reveal something. Come and see: Whoever knows how to perform an action properly and arrange words fittingly surely arouses the blessed Holy One to channel supernal elements. If so, the whole world knows how to perform an action and arrange words; what is the value of the righteous—who know the essence of the word, the essence of action, and who know how to focus the heart and aspiration—over those others who do not know as well?[121]

"The answer is: Those who do not know the essence of all this—but merely the outer arrangement and nothing more—draw to themselves a flow from behind the shoulders of the blessed Holy One, which is not called a treasury of providence. But those who know and focus the heart and aspiration generate blessings from the site of Thought, issuing through all stocks and roots in a straight path fittingly, until those above and below are blessed and the supernal Holy Name is blessed through them.[122]

“Happy is their share, for the blessed Holy One is near to them and available to them. When they call on Him, He is waiting for them; when they are in distress, He is with them. He honors them in this world and in the world that is coming, as is written: *Because he desires Me, I will deliver him. I will raise him high, for he knows My name. He calls Me and I answer him, I am with him in distress. I will rescue him and honor him. With length of days will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation* (Psalms 91:14–16).”

YHVH said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for into your hand I have given him and all his people” (Numbers 21:34).[123]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *“She does not fear for her household because of snow, for her whole household is clothed in* שָׁנִים (*shanim*), *crimson* (Proverbs 31:21). Come and see: Assembly of Israel suckles from two sides—sometimes in Compassion, sometimes in Judgment. When She needs to suckle in Compassion, Compassion finds a place in which to dwell; when She needs to suckle in Judgment, a place is found for that to dwell in, on which to settle. For so it is everywhere: nothing from above settles until it finds a place on which to settle. Thus, Assembly of Israel *does not fear for her household*. Why? Because *her whole household is clothed in* שְׁנַיִם (*shenayim*), *two*—this one settles only with that one, white with red, red with white, as has already been established.[124]

“Come and see: *YHVH said to Moses, ‘Do not fear* אותו (*oto*), *him’*—twice אותו (*oto*) is spelled completely in the Torah, with two ווי (*vavei*), *vav*s: once here, and once in the verse *until your brother seeks* אותו (*oto*), *it* (Deuteronomy 22:2). Why? Because they refer to an actual אות (*ot*), sign. *Until your brother seeks oto, its sign*—for he must describe the sign of that lost item.[125]

“Here, too, Og joined Abraham and was a member of his household; and when Abraham was circumcised, what is written? *And all the men of his household…* [*were circumcised with him*] (Genesis 17:27)—this is Og, who was circumcised with him and received this holy *ot*, sign. As soon as Og saw Israel approaching him, he said, ‘Well, surely, I myself attained previously the merit that endures for them.’ And this he relied upon.[126]

“At that moment, Moses was afraid. How could he eradicate the insignia that Abraham had engraved? He said, ‘Surely, my right arm has died—since the right is required for this! If we say, “Here is Eleazar,” he is the right of the moon and not mine; and this sign is on the right, since Abraham is on the right.’[127]

“Immediately, the blessed Holy One said, *‘Do not fear* אותו (*oto*)—Do not fear that sign of his. Even the right is not required, *for into your hand I have given* [*him*]—your left will eradicate him from the world, since he has damaged his insignia, and whoever damages this sign deserves to be uprooted from the world. Of course, your left—which is *your hand*—will eradicate him from the world.’[128]

“Therefore, [184b] he was eradicated from the world; even though he was powerful—from the sons of the mighty—and sought to destroy Israel, he fell into the hand of Moses. Consequently, Israel destroyed all—his sons and all his people and all that belonged to him, as the Companions have already established.[129]

“Happy are Israel, that Moses the prophet was among them, for whose sake the blessed Holy One performed for them all these signs, as has been established! The blessed Holy One has not sealed His covenant with any other nation, to be linked with them—only with Israel, who are the children of Abraham, as is written: *and your seed after you through their generations as an everlasting covenant* (Genesis 17:7). And it is written: *As for Me, this is My*

covenant with them, says YHVH: My spirit that is upon you, and My words that I have put in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your children, nor from the mouth of your children's children (Isaiah 59:21)."[130]

פרשת בלק

Parashat Balaq

“BALAK” (NUMBERS 22:2–25:9)

COMMENTARY ON BALAQ

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, *“Balak son of Zippor saw…* (Numbers 22:2). What sight did he see? A true sight. He saw through the window of wisdom, and he saw with his eyes. He saw through the window of wisdom, as is written: *Abimelech king of the Philistines gazed through the window…* (Genesis 26:8). What is meant by *through the window*? As is said: *Through the window she gazed, the mother of Sisera moaned* (Judges 5:28). This is surely the window of wisdom—of the skirt tails of the stars, which are windows of wisdom. There is one window in which all wisdom appears, through which one who sees the essence sees. So, too, here: *Balak saw*—through his wisdom.[1]

“*Son of* צפור (*Tsippor*), *Zippor*—as has been said. But *son of tsippor, a bird*, literally! For look, his sorcery was of various kinds. He would take a bird, shake some grass, and send it flying through the air. He performed acts, whispered incantations—and that bird would come, with grass in its mouth, chirping before him. He put it in a cage, offering incense before it, and it would inform him of certain things.[2]

“He would perform his sorcery; and the bird would chirp and fly away to *eyes uncovered*, who informed it, and

then it would return. All his practices were with that bird.[3]

"One day he performed his acts and took that bird, and it flew off and tarried and did not return. He was deeply distressed; when it finally came, he saw a fiery flame flying behind it, scorching its wings. Then he saw what he saw and became afraid of Israel.

"What is that name of that bird? It is ידוע (*Yaddu'a*); and none of those who make magical use of that bird, or know how to, know its sorcerous power as Balak knew.[4]

"All the wisdom that he knew, he knew through that bird. This is what he used to do: he bent down before it, offered incense, covered his head, bent down, and spoke. He said, 'Israel is very'; and the bird responded, 'רב (*Rav*), numerous'—on account of the supreme *Rav*, the Great One, who moved in their midst. Seventy times they chirped to one another—he feebly and the bird *rav*, greatly. Then he became frightened, as is written: *Moab was very terrified of the people, for they were rav, numerous* (Numbers 22:3)—*they were rav*, surely![5]

"In Types of Sorcery of the Ancient Kasdiel, we have found that sometimes they made this bird out of silver mingled with gold. The head, of gold; the mouth, of silver; its wings, of burnished bronze mingled with silver; the body of gold; the dots on the feathers, of silver; the feet, of gold. In the mouth, they place the tongue of that bird *Yaddu'a*, and they place that bird in a certain window. They open windows facing the sun, and at night they open windows toward the moon. They offer incense, perform sorcery, and conjure the sun; and at night they conjure the moon; [185a] and this they do for seven days. From here on, that tongue rattles the mouth of that bird; they prick that tongue with a golden needle, and it utters great things on its own.[6]

"Balak knew everything through this bird, surely! Thus, *son of tsippor, a bird*. Consequently, he saw what no other human can know or see.[7]

“*YHVH said, ‘From Bashan I will bring back, bring back from the depths of the sea’* (Psalms 68:23). We should ponder faith in the blessed Holy One, all of whose words are words of truth and deeply faithful. For once He utters a word, all is actualized. A human being, constricted of heart, says, ‘How many years, how long will it take for this to be fulfilled as such!’ Yet according to His grandeur—His glory filling all worlds—so are His affairs. A human is small, and all his affairs are temporary; he himself is temporary. But by virtue of his *teshuvah*, supplication, good deeds, and many tears, He—holy, grand, supreme above all worlds—diminishes lights and contracts His holiness toward the human to fulfill his wishes.[8]

“*YHVH said*—this refers to the time to come, when He will arouse and restore מבשן (*mi-bashan*), *from Bashan*, all those who were killed and devoured by wild beasts. For there is in the world an abode of all great beasts and towering mountains, intermingling. The mighty wild ass of the wilderness is there—namely Og, who dwelt among the wild asses of the wilderness. His praise was mighty, for he was king of Bashan, and none of the world’s kings could wage war against him due to the power of Bashan. Yet Moses came and waged war against him.[9]

“סיחון (*Siḥon*), Sihon—he was סייחא (*sayḥa*), a foal, of the wilderness, and Moab relied upon him, *for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites* (Numbers 21:13).[10]

“Come and see: When Israel destroyed the land of Sihon, a proclamation went forth in the Kingdom of Heaven: ‘Assemble, you mighty who rule over other nations, and see how the kingdom of the Amorites has been destroyed!’[11]

“At that moment, all those rulers appointed over the seven nations gathered, seeking to restore the kingdom to its former condition. Once they saw the power of Moses, they retreated, as is written: *Therefore do the rulers say ‘Come to Heshbon’* (Numbers 21:27)—those rulers

appointed over them, who gathered and said, '*Come to Heshbon!* Who is this who destroyed it? *Let it be rebuilt and well founded* as originally, and may the kingdom be restored to its former condition.'[12]

"When they saw the might of Moses and the flame of the Kingdom, they said, *For fire has come forth from Heshbon, flame from the town of Sihon* (Numbers 21:28). Since it is written *from Heshbon*, why *from the town of Sihon*? After all, *the town of Sihon* was *Heshbon*, as is written: *For Heshbon is the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites* (ibid., 26).[13]

"Well, a flame of the Kingdom of Heaven shot forth and entered and destroyed everything. When they said '*Let the city of Sihon be rebuilt and well founded*'—unidentified—they did not say *Heshbon*, for they thought that thereby it could be rebuilt as the dwelling place of the Amorites. Then they retracted and said, 'We cannot. Why? Because all ways and paths are blocked by the power of their supreme Master. If we proceed to say, "Let Heshbon be rebuilt," look: *Fire has come forth from Heshbon*! If we proceed to say *the city of Sihon*, unidentified, look: *Flame from the town of Sihon*, surely! Since that flame of fire prevails there, no one can succeed in restoring it to its former condition; from every side we are prohibited.'[14]

"From here on, *Woe to you, Moab* (Numbers 21:29), for he who was shielding you has been crushed. Consequently, as soon as Moab saw that their shield was crushed, *Moab was very terrified of the people* (ibid. 22:3). What is meant by מאד (*me'od*), *very*? More than of death.[15]

"*For they were* רב (*rav*), *numerous* (ibid.)—for then he was *rav, great*, and the great was small, as is written: *Behold, I make you small among the nations* (Obadiah 1:2). Israel was *rav, great*, instead of Esau, of whom is written ורב (*ve-rav*), *and the elder, shall serve the younger* (Genesis 25:23). Why? Because they saw that Israel prevailed above and below, as is written: *all that Israel had done to the*

Amorites (Numbers 22:2). The verse should read *that Israel had done*; why *all*? To encompass above and below. Above, toppling from their dominion princes and rulers above; and they toppled from their dominion princes and rulers below. Thus, *all that Israel had done*. So, *for they were* rav*, great*—replacing rav*, the elder*, was the holy firstborn, as is written: *My son, My firstborn, Israel* (Exodus 4:22).[16]

"Now, you might say, 'The blessed Holy One wanted it this way, yet it is not just.' Come and see: Esau was the shell, the Other Side. Once [185b] the shell emerged and was removed, the kernel appeared. The original foreskin stands outside; the covenant is greatest and highest of all, revealed afterward."[17]

Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now, this assembly will lick up everything around us" (Numbers 22:4).[18]

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, "*He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of* YHVH*…* (Zechariah 3:1). How vigilant should a person be in this world, walking in the way of truth! For all a person's paths are reckoned, guards are stationed, and witnesses are ready, demanding true justice. The judge stands to receive the testimony, and those presenting claims are whispering—it is not known whether they will proceed from the right or from the left.[19]

"For when human spirits depart this world, so many accusers confront them, and heralds come forth to proclaim either in their favor or against them, according to the outcome of the judgment. For we have learned: A person is judged many times in this world, both during his lifetime and afterward, since all his acts are subject to judgment. Yet the blessed Holy One is constantly compassionate, His mercy over all, and He does not wish to judge humans according to their deeds—as David said: *If You keep*

account of sins, O Yah, YHVH, who will stand? (Psalms 130:3).[20]

"Here one should examine. Since he said *If You keep account of sins, O Yah*, why *YHVH*? Well, here David mentioned two rungs of Compassion. *If… sins*—if sins accumulate until they mount on high toward Father and Mother, here is *YHVH*, who is Compassion! And if this Name—even though it is Compassion—is aroused in Judgment, and all rungs are obstructed by Judgment, there is still one rung we can turn to, from whom all remedies issue. That one will have mercy upon us. Who is that? *Who—Who will stand* [for us], surely! *Who will heal you*—as is said: *For your ruin is vast as the ocean; who will heal you* (Lamentations 2:13). So, *Yah, YHVH*—if these are blocked from us, *Who will stand*, since all paths open from Her.[21]

"Come and see: Joshua son of Jehozadak was completely righteous—a man who entered the innermost sanctum, who was brought into the Heavenly Academy. All the members of the Academy assembled there to examine his case.[22]

"Such are the ways of that Heavenly Academy, when one is brought in to be judged. A herald comes forth, proclaiming: 'All sons of the King, enter the concealed chamber!' The court convenes, and that person's spirit is brought up by two officers. As it enters, it approaches a column of flashing flame standing there… and is wrapped in an airy spirit blowing through that column.[23]

"So many are brought up there!… For all those who engage in Torah, creating innovations in her—those words are immediately inscribed in a certain place in the Academy. Then all those members of the Academy come to see him. Those two officers come out and bring him up to the Academy, and he immediately approaches that column, where he is enwrapped.[24]

"He enters the Academy, and they see him. If the word is fitting, happy is he! All the members of the Academy

adorn him with many sparkling crowns. If the word is of another kind, woe for that shame! They thrust him outside, and he stands within the column until they bring him in for judgment. May the Compassionate One save us![25]

"There are others who are brought up there when the blessed Holy One is disputing with the members of the Academy, and they say, 'Who will decide? Here is so-and-so, who can decide the matter!' Then they bring him up there, and he decides that matter between the blessed Holy One and the members of the Academy.[26]

"And there are others who are brought up there for punishment—to purge them and refine them."

Rabbi Yose said to him, "If so, a person dies and departs from this world without judgment! And if he does depart in judgment, why is he judged a second time?"[27]

He replied, "So I have learned, and so I have heard. For surely a person departs from this world in judgment; but before he enters the precinct of the righteous, he is brought up for judgment—there, in that Heavenly Academy.[28]

"There stands the Minister of Hell, to accuse. Happy is one who is found innocent! Otherwise, that Minister of Hell seizes him as soon as they hand him over, and he casts him from there below—like someone hurling a stone [186a] from a sling, as is written: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29). He hurls him into Hell, where he receives his punishment according to his sentence.[29]

"Come and see: *He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of* YHVH (Zechariah 3:1)—for he was brought up for judgment in that Heavenly Academy when he departed from this world. *Standing before the angel of* YHVH—that Youth, Head of the Academy, who pronounces sentence over all.[30]

"והשטן (*Ve-ha-satan*), *and Satan*, [*standing at his right to accuse him*] (ibid.). What is meant by *Satan*? The one

appointed over souls in Hell, whose craving is to bring more. He stands ready constantly, saying, '*Give, give!* Give the wicked to Hell.'[31]

"*To accuse him*—to state his sins.

"Then, *YHVH said to Satan, 'May YHVH rebuke you, O Satan; may YHVH, rebuke you!'* (Zechariah 3:2). Why two rebukes? Well, one for Dumah, and one for the source of Hell, always poised to mislead and accuse.[32]

"Come and see: That Satan on high descends, as has been established, and materializes in the form of an ox. All those wicked spirits that have been condemned to Hell, he licks up in one moment, snatching them, and descends and delivers them to Dumah after swallowing them. This is what is written: *Moab said to the elders of Midian, 'Now, this assembly will lick up everything around us as the ox licks up* [*the grass of the field*]' (Numbers 22:4)—*the* well-known *ox, the ox* poised for evil over all inhabitants of the world.[33]

"*The grass of the field*—human spirits, who are *grass of the field*, that well-known field."[34]

Rabbi Yose said, "If so, Balak was wise!"[35]

He replied, "Certainly! He had to know all the ways of that ox; and if he hadn't known, he couldn't have performed his sorcery and witchcraft."

Rabbi Yose said, "Certainly so! You have spoken well! The power of that ox begins when they proclaim about the harvest—all those days when they proclaim, and all those days when they proclaim about the spirits of human beings, namely the days of Nisan and the days of Tishrei, as has been said."[36]

YANUQA ינוקא

The Child

Rabbi Yitsḥak and Rabbi Yehudah were traveling on the road, and they reached a place called the Village of Sikhnin. They lodged with a woman who had a small son, who was in school every day. That day he left school and came home; he saw these wise men.[1]

His mother said to him, “Come near these distinguished gentlemen, and you will gain blessings from them!”

He approached them; but before getting close, he turned back. He said to his mother, “I don’t want to go near them, because they haven’t recited *Shema* today, and I’ve been taught: ‘Whoever does not recite *Shema* at its proper time is under a ban that whole day.’”[2]

They heard, and raised their hands and blessed him. They said, “Certainly so! Today we were busy with a bride and groom who did not have what they needed and were delaying their coupling. There was no one making an effort on their behalf, so we did, and we didn’t recite *Shema*—and whoever is occupied with a *mitsvah* is exempt from another *mitsvah*.”[3]

They said to him, “My son, how did you know?”

He replied, “By the smell of your clothes I knew when I came near you.”[4]

They were astonished. They washed their hands and broke bread. Rabbi Yehudah’s hands were dirty, and when washing his hands, he blessed before washing.[5]

He said to them, “If you are disciples of Rabbi Shema’yah the Pious, you shouldn’t have blessed with filthy

hands. Whoever blesses with filthy hands is liable to death!”[6]

The child opened, saying, “*When they come into the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water, that they do not die*… (Exodus 30:20). We learn from this verse that whoever is not careful about this, and appears before the King with filthy hands, is liable to death. Why? Because the fingers of a human being inhabit the height of the world.[7]

“There is a certain finger on the human hand: the finger that Moses raised. It is written: *You shall make the bars for the Dwelling, five for the boards of the one side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the boards of the second side of the Dwelling*; and it is written: *and the central bar in the middle of the boards, running from end to end* (Exodus 26:26–28). Now, if you say that *the central bar* is another one, not included in those five—not so! Rather, *the central bar* is one of those five—two on this side, two on that side, and one in the middle. The one in the middle is *the central bar*, Pillar of Jacob, mystery of Moses.[8] [186b]

“Corresponding to this, five fingers on the human hand —with *the central bar* in the middle, greatest and highest of all, by which the others are sustained.[9]

“Those five bars are called ‘five hundred years,’ through which the Tree of Life extends. The Holy Covenant is aroused by five fingers of the hand. It is a concealed matter that I have spoken![10]

“Therefore, all blessings of the priest depend upon the fingers; the spreading of Moses’ hand was based on this. If all this inheres in them, isn’t it right that they should be clean when by them one blesses the blessed Holy One? For by them and their paradigm the Holy Name is blessed! So you, who are so wise, how could you be so careless about this and not heed Rabbi Shema’yah the Pious, who said that all filth and all dirt are offered to the Other Side—for the Other Side is nourished by this filth and dirt; and this is why

fingerbowl water is חובא (*ḥova*), sin, and חובה (*ḥovah*), an obligation?”[11]

They were astonished, and could not speak.

Rabbi Yehudah said, “My son, what is your father’s name?”[12]

The child was silent for a moment. He rose and went to his mother and kissed her. He said to her, “Mother, these wise men are asking me about Father. Should I tell them?”

She replied, “My son, have you tested them?”

He replied, “Well, I have, and I found them lacking.”

His mother whispered to him, and he returned to them. He said, “You’re asking about Father. Well, he has departed from the world; and whenever holy pious ones are traveling on the road, he drives the donkeys behind them. If you are exalted holy ones, how could you have missed him, following you as a donkey-driver? Ah, but right from the start I saw who you are, and now I see through you! For Father never sees a donkey and fails to goad it from behind, to bear the yoke of Torah. Since you weren’t worthy enough for Father to be your donkey-driver, I won’t say who Father was!”[13]

Rabbi Yehudah said to Rabbi Yitsḥak, “It seems to me that this child is not human!”[14]

They ate, and that child was speaking words of Torah, innovations of Torah.

They said, “Come, let us bless.”[15]

He said to them, “You have spoken well, for the Holy Name is not blessed by this blessing without an invitation.”[16]

He opened, “*Let me bless YHVH at all times, always His praise in my mouth* (Psalms 34:2). *Let me bless YHVH*—what prompted David to say *Let me bless YHVH*? Well, David saw that an invitation is required, so he said *Let me bless*. Whenever a person sits at the table, *Shekhinah* appears there and the Other Side appears there. When he expresses an invitation to bless the blessed Holy One, the Other Side is overwhelmed, and She is arrayed in Her blessings, facing

above, whereas the Other Side is excluded. And if a person does not express an invitation to bless the blessed Holy One, the Other Side rejoices and tingles at having a share in that blessing.[17]

"Now, you might say, 'Why is there no invitation for other blessings?' Well, the object over which one blesses is itself an invitation.

"Come and see that it is so! If someone says a blessing over fruit, that fruit itself is an invitation, and he says the blessing over it, and the Other Side has no share in it. Before this, when that fruit is in the domain of the Other Side, one does not say a blessing over it—and it is written: *It shall not be eaten* (Leviticus 19:23), so that no blessing will be said over that fruit and the Other Side will not be blessed. As soon as it leaves his domain, it may be eaten and a blessing is recited over it, and [the fruit] itself is an invitation to the blessing. Similarly, with all things of the world over which blessings are said—all of them are an invitation to blessing, and the Other Side has no share in them.[18]

"Now, you might say, 'So, too, with Grace after Meals, the cup of blessing is the invitation. Why "Come, let us bless"?' Well, because previously when one drank and said 'who creates the fruit of the vine,' [the cup] was the invitation; so now for Grace after Meals, we need a change for another invitation, since this cup is for the blessed Holy One, not for food. Therefore, a verbal invitation is required.[19]

"Now, you might say, 'Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten' is the invitation, and 'Blessed is He [of whose bounty] we have eaten' is the blessing.' Certainly so! But 'Let us bless' is another invitation. The preceding invitation is an invitation to the cup of blessing, undefined; and once this cup is grasped, it becomes another invitation —with the phrase 'Let us bless'—to the upper world, from which all sustenance issues. Therefore it is expressed in a

concealed manner, for the upper world is concealed, and an invitation can be expressed toward it only with this rung, the cup of blessing."[20]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Happy is our share, for since [187a] days of old until now, I have never heard such words! Surely, as I said, this is no human being!"[21]

He said to him, "Son, Angel of *YHVH*, His beloved! Regarding what you said: *You shall make the bars for the Dwelling, five for the boards* [*of the one side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the boards of the second side of the Dwelling*,] *and five bars at the rear to the west* (Exodus 26:26–27)—look, there are many *bars* here, but there are only two hands."[22]

He said to them, "Just like I say: 'From a person's mouth you hear who he is.' But since you weren't paying attention, I will explain."[23]

He opened, saying, "*The wise one has his eyes in his head, and the fool walks in darkness* (Ecclesiastes 2:14). Now, where are a person's eyes if not *in his head*? Perhaps in the trunk of his body or in his arm? Does this distinguish *the wise one* from all inhabitants of the world? Ah, but the verse surely means as follows. For we have learned: A person should not walk four cubits with his head uncovered. Why? Because *Shekhinah* rests upon his head. Every wise person has his eyes and his words בראשו (*be-rosho*), *on his head*—focused on the one who is resting and appearing on his head. When his eyes are there, he knows that the light kindled on his head needs oil. For the human body is a wick, and a light is kindled above, and King Solomon exclaimed: *Let oil on your head not be lacking* (Ecclesiastes 9:8); for the light on one's head needs oil, namely good deeds. Thus, *the wise one has his eyes on his head*—and nowhere else![24]

"Surely, you are wise, and *Shekhinah* rests upon your heads. How could you fail to notice this? It is written: *five bars for the boards of the one side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the boards of the second side of the Dwelling*. The

verse says *the one* and *the second*; it doesn't say *third* and *fourth*. For *one* and *second* are the essence of the two sides, so only these two are enumerated."[25]

They came and kissed him as before. Rabbi Yehudah wept and said, "Rabbi Shim'on, happy is your share! Happy is your generation! Through your merit, even little schoolchildren are mighty, towering cliffs!"[26]

His mother came and said to them, "Masters, I beg of you, look upon my son only with a good eye!"

They replied, "Happy is your share, worthy woman, selected from among all women! For the blessed Holy One has selected your share and raised your banner above all women of the world."[27]

The child said, "I'm not afraid of this, because I'm the son of a great and precious fish; and a fish doesn't fear the evil eye, as is written: וידגו לרב (*ve-yidgu la-rov*), *Let them teem like fish multitudinously, in the midst of the earth* (Genesis 48:16). What is meant by *la-rov, multitudinously*? This includes overwhelming the evil eye. And we have learned: 'Just as fish of the sea are covered by water and are immune to the evil eye, [so the descendants of Joseph are immune to the evil eye].' *La-rov, multitudinously*, surely![28]

"*In the midst of the earth*—among human beings on earth."[29]

They said, "Son, Angel of *YHVH*! There is no evil eye in us, and we do not come from the side of the evil eye. The blessed Holy One is sheltering you with His wings."[30]

He opened, saying, "*The angel redeeming me from all evil*... (Genesis 48:16). This verse was uttered by Jacob in the Holy Spirit. If it was spoken in the Holy Spirit, it contains a mystery of wisdom. המלאך (*Ha-mal'akh*), *The angel*—he calls Her *angel*, and he calls Her by other names. Why is She called here *angel*? Well, She is a messenger from above when receiving radiance from the supernal speculum; for when Father and Mother bless this one, they say, 'Daughter, go and care for Your house, attend to Your house. This is

what You should do for Your house: go and nourish them. Go, for that world below is waiting for You; the members of Your household expect sustenance from You. Here is everything You need to provide for them.' Then She is an *angel*.[31]

"Now, you might say, 'But in several places She is called *angel*, without coming to nourish the worlds. Furthermore, She doesn't nourish the worlds by this name, but rather by the name *YHVH*.' Certainly so! When She is sent by Father and Mother, She is called *angel*; once She settles in Her place, upon two cherubim, Her name is *YHVH*.[32]

"When She first appeared to Moses, She was called *angel*. To Jacob, She did not appear like this, but rather in a symbol, as is written: *Rachel came* (Genesis 29:9)—an image of another Rachel, as is written: *Thus says YHVH: A voice is heard in Ramah… Rachel weeping for her children* (Jeremiah 31:15). *Rachel came*—unspecified. *With sheep* (Genesis, ibid.)—Her rungs. *Her father's* (ibid.)—surely, and all of them were designated and entrusted in Her hands. *For she was a shepherdess* (ibid.)—guiding them, appointed over them. But here, [187b] concerning Moses, it is written: *The angel of YHVH appeared to him* (Exodus 3:2).[33]

"Now, you might say, 'Abraham is more praiseworthy, since with him *angel* is not mentioned, but rather, *YHVH appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre* (Genesis 18:1).' Well, there, with Abraham, אדון (*Adon*), Lord, appeared to him—spelled with א ד נ י (*alef, dalet, nun, yod*)—for at that time he received the covenant, and whereas He had been concealed from him until now, He was revealed to him as Lord and Ruler. This was fitting, for then he was joined to that rung, and no further; so by the name *Adon*, He became his Master.[34]

"But Moses was undivided, as is written: *Moses! Moses!* (Exodus 3:4), with no pausal sign interposing—whereas it is written *Abraham! | Abraham!* (Genesis 22:11), with a sign interposing, since now he was complete, whereas

previously he was not. There is a difference between the current *Abraham* and the earlier *Abraham*; but with Moses, the instant he was born—the resplendent speculum, for it is written: *She saw that he was good* (Exodus 2:2), and similarly: *God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis 1:4). He was immediately joined to his rung, and so, *Moses! Moses!* with no sign interposing. Therefore, toward Moses, She diminished Herself, as is written: *The angel of YHVH*.[35]

"Jacob called Her *angel* as he was departing from the world. Why? Because at that moment he possessed Her, gaining dominion. Moses in his lifetime, Jacob after departing from the world; Moses in body, Jacob in spirit. Happy is the share of Moses![36]

"*Redeeming me from all evil*—for he never approached the side of evil, and evil could not prevail over him.

"*May He bless the lads* (Genesis 48:16)—Jacob was then arranging his house, like someone moving into a new house, arranging and decorating it. *May He bless* הנערים (*ha-ne'arim*), *the lads*—the well-known ones, who are appointed over the world, so that blessings may flow from them: two cherubim.[37]

"*Let my name be called in them* (ibid.)—now he arranged his house and ascended to his rung, for union transpires through Jacob. The body cleaves to where it should, both arms with it.[38]

"Once those *lads* are blessed, then fittingly, *let them teem like fish multitudinously in the midst of the earth*. Normally, fish multiply in water, and if they come out of the water onto dry land, they immediately die. But these are not like that; rather, they come from the Great Sea, and they increase by being fruitful and multiplying *in the midst of the earth*—which is not so with any fish of the world.[39]

"What is written before? *He blessed Joseph and said* (Genesis 48:15). Yet we don't find any blessings for him here; for look, he blessed him later, as is written: *A fruitful son is Joseph* (ibid. 49:22). However, since he blessed these

lads, he blessed Joseph, for they can be blessed only through Joseph. And since he is concealed and should not be revealed, it is written *Let my name be called in them and the name of my fathers*—to cover him. From the patriarchs they are blessed, from nowhere else; this is covering, to conceal what is necessary."[40]

They came and kissed him as before, and said, "Come, let us bless."[41]

He said, "I will bless, since everything you've heard until now has been from me, and I will fulfill the verse *He who has a generous eye will bless*. Why? *For he gives of his bread to the poor* (Proverbs 22:9). From my bread and food of Torah you have eaten."[42]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Beloved son of the blessed Holy One, surely we have learned: 'The master of the house breaks bread, and the guest blesses.'"[43]

He replied, "I'm not master of the house, and you're not guests! But I found a verse and I'll fulfill it, for I surely have *a generous eye*. Without your even asking, I've spoken until now, and you've eaten my bread and food."[44]

He took the cup of blessing and blessed, though his hands could not support the cup; they were trembling. When he reached "for the land and for the food," he said, "*I raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of* YHVH (Psalms 116:13)." The cup stood firm, settling in his right hand.[45]

He blessed them. At the end, he said, "May it be the Will that life be conveyed to one of these from the King on whom all life depends. May the blessed Holy One be his guarantor, and may he find a guarantor below to share the guarantee with the blessed Holy One."[46]

Having blessed, he closed his eyes for a moment. Then he opened them and said, "Companions, peace to you from the good Master, to whom all peace belongs."[47]

They were amazed, and wept, and blessed him. They stayed that night; [188a] they rose early and went on.

When they reached Rabbi Shim’on, they told him what had happened. Rabbi Shim’on was amazed. He said, “He is the son of a mighty rock—and is worthy of this, and of more than anyone can imagine—son of Rav Hamnuna Sava!”[48]

Rabbi El’azar quivered, and said, “I must go see that burning lamp!”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “This one attains no name in the world, for something sublime is within him. It is a mystery, for the flow of his father shines upon him, and this mystery has not spread among the Companions.”[49]

One day the Companions were sitting and locking horns with one another. Present there were Rabbi El’azar, Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Ḥiyya, and Rabbi Yose, and the other Companions. They said, “Look at what is written: *Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war* (Deuteronomy 2:9)—for the sake of Ruth and Naamah, who were destined to issue from them! All the more so, Zipporah, Moses’ wife, who was from Midian, and Jethro and his children, who issued from Midian, all of whom were truly righteous. Furthermore, Moses, whom they raised in Midian. Yet, the blessed Holy One said to him, *Wreak the vengeance of the Children of Israel upon the Midianites* (Numbers 31:2). So, there is bias in this matter, since the Midianites were more worthy of being saved than Moab.”[50]

Rabbi Shim’on replied, “There is no comparison between someone who is going to pick figs in the future and someone who has already picked them.”[51]

They said to him, “Even if he has already picked them, it is praiseworthy.”[52]

He replied, “One who has not gathered figs tends the fig tree constantly, so that it will suffer no harm, for the sake of the figs that it will eventually yield. But once he has picked the figs, he leaves the tree, tending it no more.[53]

“So Moab, who was destined to yield those figs, was protected by the blessed Holy One, as is written: *Do not*

attack Moab. But of Midian, whose figs had already been yielded and picked, it is written *Attack the Midianites* (Numbers 25:17), since from here on, this fig tree was not destined to bear fruit, and therefore deserved to be consumed by fire."

He opened, saying, "*Moab said to the elders of Midian*, '*Now*, [*this assembly*] *will lick up* [*everything around us*]...' (Numbers 22:4). It was Moab who made the first move; yet because of those figs that Moab would one day produce, they were saved from punishment."[54]

Rabbi El'azar wanted to see Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya, his father-in-law. Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Yose, and Rabbi Ḥiyya accompanied him; they traveled on the road, discussing words of Torah the whole way.[55]

Rabbi Abba said, "Why is it written: *YHVH said to me, 'Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war'* (Deuteronomy 2:9), and also, *You will approach opposite the Ammonites; do not attack them and do not provoke them* (ibid., 19)? One statement is like the other; what difference is there between them? They seem to be equivalent. And yet, we have learned: 'When they approached the Moabites, Israel displayed themselves in all their battle gear, although they did not provoke them; whereas toward the Ammonites, Israel wrapped themselves in their cloaks without any battle gear at all.' Yet, the verses indicate equivalence!"[56]

Rabbi El'azar replied, "Certainly so! We have learned: This one was impudent and said, 'מואב (*Mo'av*), *Moab*,' as is written: *She named him Mo'av, Moab* (Genesis 19:37); so Israel confronted them impudently, just as she was impudent and said '*Mo'av*'—מאב (*me-av*), from father, this son came. But toward the younger one—who said 'בן עמי (*Ben Ammi*), *son of my people* (ibid., 38), disguising her conduct—Israel disguised their conduct, wrapping themselves in

cloaks, appearing to them as real brothers. This has already been established."[57]

As they were going along, Rabbi El'azar remembered that child. They made a detour of three parasangs and reached there. They were received in that house, and as they entered they found the child sitting at a table being arranged for him. As soon as he saw them, he approached.[58]

He said to them, "Enter, holy pious ones! Enter, planted pillars of the world, who are praised by those above and below! Even fish of the Great Sea come out on dry land to meet them!"[59]

Rabbi El'azar came and kissed him on the head; then he kissed him again on the mouth. He said, "The first kiss is for the fish who leave the water and come onto dry land, and the second kiss is for eggs of the fish, producing fine fruit in the world."[60]

The child said, "By the smell of your clothes, I see that Ammon and Moab have been challenging you. How were you saved from them? You don't have any weapons in your hands. Otherwise, you would have walked safely, without fear."[61] [188b]

Rabbi El'azar, Rabbi Abba, and Rabbi Ḥiyya were amazed. Rabbi Abba said, "Happy is this journey! Happy is our share, that we have been privileged to see this!"

They set the table as before. He said, "Holy wise men, do you prefer bread of battle and a table with weapons, or do you prefer to bless the King with all weapons of war, since a table cannot be elevated without battle?"[62]

Rabbi El'azar replied, "Beloved, dear, holy son, we prefer the latter. For look, we are familiar with all weapons of war, and we know how to fight with sword, bow, lance, and slingstones; and you're a little boy—you haven't yet seen how mighty warriors of the world wage battle."[63]

The child rejoiced. He said, "Of course, I haven't seen. But it is written: *Let not the buckler of armor boast like the*

unfastener (1 Kings 20:11).”[64]

They arranged the table with bread and with all that they needed.

Rabbi El’azar said, “How much joy there is in my heart because of this little boy! How many innovations will be created at this table! That’s why I said that I knew that bells of the Holy Spirit are ringing within him.”[65]

The child said, “Whoever wants bread, let him eat by the mouth of the sword.”[66]

Rabbi El’azar rejoiced. The child approached him again, and said, “Since you bragged about yourself, you should wage battle first. Before, I said that the battle should follow the meal; but now, whoever wants fine bread should dangle weapons from his hands.”

Rabbi El’azar said, “It is fitting for you to display some of your own weapons.”

He opened, “*When you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present* תרומה (*terumah*), *a donation, to YHVH* (Numbers 15:19). This verse was uttered concerning *the sheaf of* תנופה (*tenuphah*), waving (Leviticus 23:15). What is meant by *tenuphah*? If it is called *tenuphah* because the priest אניף (*aneiph*), waves, it above, what do we care if he waves it or lowers it? But surely, it must be above, and thus: *terumah, raising*. And even though we have interpreted it as תרי ממאה (*terei mi-me’ah*), two out of a hundred, and so it is, still, what is meant by *tenuphah*? ארמותא (*Aramuta*), raising.[67]

“A mystery of wisdom here. O holy pious ones, wielders of the lance, you did not serve Rabbi Shema’yah the Pious, for otherwise you would know the meaning of *tenuphah*, the meaning of חטה (*ḥittah*), wheat, and the meaning of שעורה (*se’orah*), barley.[68]

“תנופה (*Tenuphah*), which we have mentioned, is equivalent to תנו פה (*Tenu peh*), Give a mouth, and its mystery is *Tenu, Give, glory to YHVH your God* (Jeremiah 13:16)—for the supernal *peh*, mouth, is the *glory* that we should give to the blessed Holy One. Therefore we must raise above, to show that to

Him we are giving this mouth, since the supernal King receives praise only when Israel arranges and gives it to the King. This is *tenuphah*, and it is surely raising.[69]

"The verse with which I began: *When you eat of the bread of the land*. Now, is *the bread of the land* barley? Not so! But we offer barley because barley precedes the other grains of the world. שעורה (*Se'orah*), Barley, is שעור ה (*shi'ur he*), the measure of *he*, referring to a particular place in the measure of *he*. חִטָּה (*Ḥittah*), Wheat—ט (*tet*), with a dot in the middle, for the Other Side, sinful, has no share there. Rather, *ḥittah*—the Daughter who מתחטא (*mitḥatta*), endears Herself, to Her Father, and He grants Her desire. What is חטה (*ḥittah*)? Totality of twenty-two letters."[70]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Although we should listen, here we should speak, drawing the bow."[71]

The child replied, "Here is a shield against the arrow!"

Rabbi El'azar said, "Surely, we call Her חטה (*ḥittah*), wheat; but we see that among all the tribes the letters ט ח (*ḥet, tet*) do not appear, yet in Her they do, and we call Her *ḥittah*."[72]

The child replied, "Certainly so, for ט ח (*ḥet, tet*) dwell close to Her! Among the tribes, these letters do not appear, since they come from the side of holiness; but by Her they dwell.[73]

"If you say, 'No!'—draw the sword and say, 'Why does that Daughter hold these letters?' Well, if you knew the sin of Adam—which they said was חטה (*ḥittah*)—you would know all. When this Tree is victorious, the Good Side seizes the whole Other Side, overwhelming it.[74]

"The ancient Companions explained this word, situating it afar: simply *ḥittah*. The later ones came and said, '*Ḥittah*, really!' Isaiah came and explained the word, as is written: [*You will be far from oppression*…] וממחתה (*u-mi-meḥittah*), *and from ruin; it will surely not come near you* (Isaiah 54:14). Therefore, a dot in the middle, so that it not be חטאה (*ḥata'ah*), sin, for without the dot, it would be *ḥata'ah*. The

substitution between ט (*tet*) and ת (*tav*) spells תבירו (*teviru*), destruction, for the Other Side. Elucidation of the word![75]

"You, Companions, who did not serve Rabbi [189a] Shema'yah the Pious, say that the Other Side has no share in the seven species of grain. Not so, for the Other Side has a share in everything that rots in the ground. What share does he have? The chaff, driven away by the wind, as is written: *Not so the wicked, but like chaff that the wind drives away* (Psalms 1:4); and similarly, *For the wind passes by and it is no more, and its place no longer knows it* (ibid. 103:16)—for the Holy Spirit scatters it in every direction, so that it is nowhere to be found.[76]

"This refers to the female. What is the male? Straw. Chaff and straw go together, so they are exempt from tithing, since they have no share in holiness.[77]

"ה (*He*)—clean grain, without straw or chaff. ח ט (*Ḥet, tet*)—male and female, chaff and straw. ה (*He*)—clean grain. So, fullness of the tree is חטה (*ḥittah*), wheat, and the tree by which Adam חטא (*ḥata*), sinned, was *ḥittah*, for all is in the mystery of *ḥittah*."[78]

Rabbi El'azar was amazed, and the Companions were amazed. Rabbi El'azar said, "Certainly so!"

The child said, "Certainly so is the verse with which we began; for barley comes first into the world, and it is available as food for a grazing animal, unspecified. This is the mystery of a thousand mountains growing every day, and She eats them. It is called 'bread of תרומה (*terumah*),' food of that *terumah*, and it is offered at night, for it is written: *When the sun sets, he becomes pure, and afterward he may eat of the holy, for it is his bread* (Leviticus 22:7). *Of the holy—terumah. Of the holy*, and not *the holy*, for what is 'holy,' without further qualification, is not called *terumah*, since we have learned: 'Greater stringency applies to the holy than to *terumah*.'[79]

"The Holy Land is under the authority of the blessed Holy One, and no alien authority can enter there. How was

the Holy Land tested to see if she remained faithful, not conjoining with an alien authority? By offering this *terumah* of barley, modeled on the mystery of the straying wife.[80]

Rabbi Abba said, "The blade of a sword is surely pointed at you!"[81]

The child replied, "I'm surely strengthened by shield and buckler to protect myself from it."

Rabbi Abba said, "The Holy Land has no alien authority, and it cannot enter there. So from whom do chaff and straw come?"[82]

The child opened, saying, "*God created the human in His image*… (Genesis 1:27), and it is written: *God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply*' (ibid., 28). If the serpent had not copulated with Eve, would [Adam] never have generated offspring? Or, if Israel had not sinned with the Golden Calf, would they not have generated offspring?[83]

"Ah, but surely, if the serpent had not copulated with Eve, Adam would have immediately generated offspring—certainly; for look, a decree was issued the moment he was created, as is written: *Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and conquer it*! And those offspring would have all been pure, without any filth at all.[84]

"Similarly, the Holy Land—into which the alien authority cannot enter—produces chaff and straw, not from that side; whereas outside the Land, the chaff and straw are of the Other Side, which imitates holiness as a monkey apes humans."[85]

Rabbi El'azar and the Companions came and kissed him.

He said to them, "It seems to me that by weapons of battle I've earned the bread on the table."

Rabbi El'azar said, "Certainly so, for all weapons of battle are in your hand, triumphant in your hand!"

They came and kissed him as before.

He opened, saying, “*On the vine three tendrils, and as she was budding, up came her blossom, her clusters ripened into grapes* (Genesis 40:10). Until here, vision of the matter; from here on, his own vision, as is written: *Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand* (ibid., 11). But vision of the matter was for Joseph’s sake, to inform him, so that Joseph would hear and know.[86]

“We have learned: There are seven heavens, and these are seven palaces, and they are six, and they are five. All of them issue from ancient, holy, supernal wine—the wine that Jacob drew from afar, squeezing it from grapes of that vine. Then Jacob conveyed to [Isaac] the wine that was fitting for him, and he rejoiced and drank, as is written: *He brought* לו (*lo*), *him, wine and he drank* (Genesis 27:25)—here are included above and below; so Scripture extends the word, stretching it out by two accents, namely לו (*lo*), *him*: him below, him above, embracing two aspects.[87]

“Enoch-Metatron has said, ‘*He brought him wine*—pouring water into that wine. If he had not poured in water, he could not have tolerated it.’ Enoch–Metatron spoke well, and this is why Scripture extends טעמא (*ta’ama*), the intonation. That wine flows from rung to rung, and all טעמין (*ta’amin*), taste, it until Joseph the Pious tastes it—namely the faithful beloved, as is written: *like fine wine—flowing to my beloved smoothly* (Song of Songs 7:10). [189b] What is meant by *like fine wine*? That Jacob came and poured water into it; this is *fine wine*, just as Enoch-Metatron said.”[88]

Rabbi El’azar was amazed, and Rabbi Abba was amazed. They said, “Surely, this wine is yours. You have triumphed—angel, messenger, mouth of the Holy Spirit!”[89]

He replied, “That vine is still waiting to yield fruit. *On the vine*—the vine that is known for its sanctity; for there is another vine, called *alien vine*, whose grapes are not grapes, but hard, seizing the heart, biting like a dog. Those grapes are called *a corrupt, alien vine* (Jeremiah 2:21). But of this vine is written *on the vine*—the well-known one, the

one from which all holy ones tasted old wine, fine wine, wine that Jacob blended with water, so that all those who know how to taste wine tasted it, and it was good for the palate.[90]

"When that vine reaches Her, it puts forth *three tendrils*, which are three images of the patriarchs, by whom She is sanctified. There is no sanctification except by wine, and there is no blessing except by wine, wherever joy prevails.[91]

"*As she was budding*—like a bride adorning herself, entering in the joyous passion of that wine blended with water. Then, *up came her blossom*—Her love ascends toward Her Beloved, and She begins to sing, entering in love. Then those tender grapes become full and ripen, filling with that fine old wine. So, when one blesses over wine and reaches 'for the land,' he must pour in water, since one should recite the blessing 'Have compassion over Israel, Your people' with water in wine; otherwise, who can tolerate it? This was to inform Joseph, since the matter depended on him.[92]

"Enoch-Metatron said, '*Three tendrils*, surely—corresponding to the three patriarchs. But She has four! Well, this is what is written: והיא כפורחת (*ve-hi khe-phoraḥat*), *as she was budding*—when She rises ופרחת (*u-phareḥat*), and flies, soaring with Her wings—then *up came her blossom*: that fourth one, remaining, who rises with Her, not parting from Her, as is written: *He rode upon a cherub and flew* (2 Samuel 22:11), when He flies. *Khe-phoraḥat*—when פורחת (*poraḥat*), She flies.' Enoch-Metatron spoke well, and so it is."[93]

All the Companions came and kissed him. Rabbi El'azar said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One who sent me here!"

The child said, "Companions, bread and wine are the essence of the table; all the rest of the food is subsidiary to them. Look, Torah has gained them, and they belong to her.

Now Torah implores you lovingly, saying, *Come, eat of my bread! Drink of the wine I have mingled!* (Proverbs 9:5). Since Torah is inviting you and begging you to do this, you should fulfill her wish. Please, since she is inviting you, do her wish!”[94]

They said, “Certainly so!”

They sat and ate, rejoicing with him. After they had eaten, they lingered at the table.

He opened, saying, “*Moab said to the elders of Midian, ‘Now, this assembly will lick up everything around us as the ox licks up the grass of the field…’* (Numbers 22:4). *Moab said to the elders of Midian*—it is not written *The elders of Moab said to the elders of Midian*, but rather *Moab said*—the young took advice from the elders, and the elders were drawn to them and gave them advice. What advice did they give them? Evil advice they took for themselves. They said to Moab, ‘We have raised an evil growth in our midst. Who is that? Moses, their master—because of a certain priest who was among us, who trained him, raised him in his house, and gave him his daughter in marriage. Furthermore, he gave him money and sent him to Egypt to destroy the whole country, and he and all his household were drawn after him. If we can uproot that master of theirs from the world, his whole people will be immediately uprooted from the world.’ The whole wicked plan about the affair of Peor came from Midian.[95]

“Come and see that everything stemmed from Midian, and all their counsel was aimed at Moses. On their advice, Balaam was commissioned. As soon as they saw that Balaam could not prevail, they adopted another evil plan—and prostituted their wives and daughters even more than Moab did; for of the Midianite women is written *Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam’s word, led the Children of Israel to betray* YHVH [*in the affair of Peor*]… (Numbers 31:16). Everything stemmed from Midian.[96]

“They conspired [190a] with their chieftain that he should prostitute his daughter, intending to ensnare Moses in their net. With many kinds of charms they adorned her so that their leader would be caught; but the blessed Holy One *turns sages back* (Isaiah 44:25). They foresaw that the leader would be caught in their net, but they did not understand. They saw, yet they did not see. They saw the leader of the people falling with her, along with many thousand others, and they thought that it was Moses. They prostituted her, instructing her about Moses: ‘Couple only with him.’[97]

“She said to them, ‘How will I know?’

“They replied, ‘The one before whom you see everyone rising—couple with him and with nobody else.’

“When Zimri son of Salu appeared, twenty-four thousand members of the tribe of Simeon rose before him, since he was their chieftain; so she thought that he was Moses, and she coupled with him. When all those others saw this, they did what they did, and what happened happened.[98]

“Everything stemmed from Midian, in various ways, and therefore Midian was punished. The blessed Holy One said to Moses, ‘*Wreak the vengeance of the Children of Israel upon the Midianites* (Numbers 31:2)—for you it is fitting, for you it is appropriate. As for Moab, I will defer them until after two pearls issue from them. It is David son of Jesse who will wreak vengeance upon Moab, washing out the pot full of filth’—as is written: *Moab is My washbasin* (Psalms 60:10), surely! Until those two pearls issued, [Moab] was not punished; as soon as they did, David came and washed their filth out of the pot. All of them were punished: Midian in the days of Moses, Moab in the days of David.[99]

“Come and see the wicked of Midian; for despite all this, they did not subside from all their evil. Generations later—when they saw that Joshua had died along with all those elders, who were worthy to have miracles performed by

them—they said, ‘Now the time is ripe for us!’ What did they do? They approached Amalek, saying, ‘You should remember what the Israelites and Moses their master and Joshua his disciple did to you, annihilating you from the world. Now is the time, for they have no one to protect them, and we are with you.’ Immediately, *Midian and Amalek and the Easterners* [*came up and raided them*]; *Because of Midian, the Children of Israel made themselves the dugouts* [*that are in the mountains*…] (Judges 6:3, 2). There was no one in the world who perpetrated evil as utterly as Midian. If you say ‘Amalek’—well, Amalek because of jealousy for the covenant, for they accosted the supernal Covenant. So the blessed Holy One vents eternal jealousy that will never be forgotten.”[100]

They said, “Certainly so! There is no doubt in the world.”

He opened, saying, “*YHVH said to me, ‘Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war…’* (Deuteronomy 2:9), and it is written: *You will approach opposite the Ammonites; do not attack them and do not provoke them* (ibid., 19). *YHVH said to me*—didn’t we know until now that the blessed Holy One was speaking with Moses and with no one else? Why is it written *YHVH said to me*? Well, the blessed Holy One commanded only Moses not to harm Moab, not anyone else; to David He did not issue this command. So, *to me*.[101]

“*Do not attack Moab*—even invading the slightest bit across their border; for someone will issue from them who will wreak vengeance upon them on behalf of Israel, namely David, who was descended from Ruth the Moabitess.

“*And do not provoke them to war*—all this was commanded to Moses, but to someone else it was permitted. If you say, ‘It was permitted to Joshua and to those elders who outlived him’—not so! For they were all members of Moses’ court, and what was forbidden to Moses was forbidden to them. Furthermore, those fine pearls had

not yet issued—for after all, in the days of the Judges, Ruth issued, and she was the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab. Eglon died, killed by Ehud, and another king was appointed; and this daughter of his was orphaned, and she was placed in the home of a guardian, in the fields of Moab. When Elimelech went there, he married her to his son.[102]

"If you say that Elimelech converted her there—no! Rather, she learned all the household customs, and the food and the drink, before she was converted. Only afterward, when she went with Naomi, did Ruth say *Your people is my people, and your God my God* (Ruth 1:16).[103]

"Naamah issued from among the Ammonites in the days of David. Then the Holy Spirit settled upon David and said to him, 'David, when I measured out the whole world, Israel was חבל נחלתו (*ḥevel naḥalato*), *the line of His possession* (Deuteronomy 32:9). I remember what Moab did to *the line of His possession*. So what is written of them? *He measured them out* בחבל (*ba-ḥevel*), *with the line* (2 Samuel 8:2)—with that *line* of *YHVH*'s possession. The line seized all those who were from that seed.[104]

"It is written: מלא החבל (*melo ha-ḥevel*), *one full length of line* (ibid.). What is meant by *melo ha-ḥevel*? The one of whom is written *The whole earth* מלא (*melo*), *is full of, His glory* (Isaiah 6:3). He said, 'This one is to be spared, and that one is to be killed.' And that *line* seized those who were deserving of death. Therefore he held that *line* and stretched out *the line*—for that *line* of *YHVH*'s possession.[105]

"As for Midian, Gideon destroyed all that seed, not leaving any of those who had harmed Israel by counsel or in any other way. Against all those who harm Israel, the blessed Holy One retains enmity, wreaking vengeance on them. But if good is destined to come to the world from them, [190b] He delays His anger and wrath until that good emerges into the world, and afterward He takes vengeance and executes judgment upon them."[106]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Certainly so! This is elucidation of the matter.”

The child said, “From here on, Companions, prepare weapons of battle in your hands and wage war!”[107]

Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*Bless YHVH, O His angels, mighty in strength, fulfilling His word, heeding the sound of His word* (Psalms 103:20). King David issued an invitation to bless the blessed Holy One, inviting the powers of heaven —the stars, constellations, and other forces—and joining his own soul with them to bless the blessed Holy One, as is written: *Bless YHVH, all His forces*, [*His servants performing His will. Bless YHVH, O all His works, in all places of His dominion*.] *Bless, O my soul, YHVH!* (ibid., 21–22). He concludes all the blessings by mentioning his soul.

“He invited the angels on high to bless Him, as is written: *Bless YHVH, O His angels, mighty in strength*, עושי (*osei*), *fulfilling, His word*. Before Israel appeared, the angels on high performed and completed the work. As soon as Israel came and stood at Mount Sinai and said נעשה (*Na’aseh*), *We will do, and we will heed* (Exodus 24:7), they took over עשי”ה (*asiyyah*), doing, from the ministering angels and were included in *His word*. From then on, *assiyah*, doing, on earth was among Israel alone, while the angels acted alone, with Israel completing and consummating *assiyah*. So first, *mighty in strength, osei, fulfilling, His word*, and then *heeding*. Happy are Israel, who have taken over *assiyah* from them, and through whom it is fulfilled!”[108]

The child said, “Guard yourself, and succeed with your weapons! Has Israel gained only this praise and no other?”

He replied, “This praise I have discovered and no other.”

The child said, “The blade of your sword fails—or you don’t wield it as a warrior should. What is the highest praise, which was not entrusted to the angels on high alone, but only to Israel [along with them]? *Qedushah*. Blessing was

entrusted to them alone, as it was entrusted to Israel; but ‘Holy’ was not entrusted to them alone, only together with Israel, for they perform *Qedushah* only along with Israel.

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *One called to another, saying*, [“*Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts*…”] (Isaiah 6:3)!’ But when? When Israel sanctifies below; and as long as Israel doesn’t sanctify below, they do not utter *Qedushah*.[109]

“For *Qedushah* ascends from three worlds, not from two. This corresponds to: *One called*—one; *to another*—two; *saying*—three. There are three worlds, and correspondingly three sanctifications. So it is to Israel’s praise that they take up *Qedushah* below.”[110]

Rabbi El’azar said, “So it is, and we have established these matters. We have furthermore established that three sanctifications were entrusted to Israel below, from this verse: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I, YHVH, am holy. You shall hallow yourselves*—one; *and become holy*—two; *for I, YHVH, am holy*—three. Here sanctification was entrusted to them.”[111]

He said to him, “I have done well—because you didn’t remember the lance till I took it from behind your shoulder and put it in your hand! From here on, remember the lance that’s in your hand. Now return to where you left off.”[112]

Rabbi El’azar said, “To the words we were engaged in, concerning בְּרָכָה (*berakhah*), blessing. ברכו (*Barakhu*), *Bless* (Psalms 103:20)—what is meant by *barakhu*? Draw blessings from the place whence all blessings issue, until they form בְּרֵכָה (*berekhah*), a pool, through the abundant flow that is drawn. And from abundance of water in that pool, the waters will immediately swarm with numerous fish of all kinds. What is that flow? *YHVH* (ibid.)—a stream of light, shining from that resplendent speculum, drawn from above to below.[113]

“This is for the celestial angels, living in the loftiest chamber—to them is said *Bless YHVH*. We, who dwell below,

say ‘Bless את (*et*) *YHVH*’; for we need to draw upon us this *Et*, through whom we may enter into the presence of the King, to see His face. So David said, *As for me*, בצדק (*be-tsedeq*), *in righteousness, I will behold Your face* (Psalms 17:15)—*be-tsedeq, by righteousness*, surely! Therefore, the beginning of prayer is ‘Bless *et YHVH*,’ to draw upon our heads this *Et*. Once we draw this *Et* upon us, we should utter prayer and offer praise.[114]

“Consequently, it is forbidden for anyone to bless a person before offering his prayer, drawing upon his head this *Et*. If he hastens to bless someone first, he draws upon that person an idolatrous cult site instead of this *Et*. Therefore, for the celestial angels is written *Bless YHVH*, whereas for us an additional *et*.”[115]

The child said, “Now I surely know that your weapons are fine—if you remember them and don’t forget them! Certainly, the power of a man who wages war [191a] is in lance and sword.

“What is meant by *mighty in strength, fulfilling His word, heeding the sound of His word*?”[116]

Rabbi El’azar replied, “I have already said.”[117]

The child said, “I know for sure that the power of your arm has weakened. Now is not the time to wait, but to strike with the sling, stone after stone, as is said: *with sling and stone* (1 Samuel 17:50)—hurriedly, one after another.”[118]

Rabbi El’azar rejoiced, and Rabbi Abba and the Companions rejoiced.

The child opened, saying, “*Black am I but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem—like the tents of Kedar, like Solomon’s curtains. Do not look at me for being blackish…* (Song of Songs 1:5–6). These words have already been established. However, when She is immersed in great love for Her Beloved, through the pressure of love that She cannot bear, She diminishes Herself extremely until nothing is seen of Her but the tiniest single point. What is that? ’

(*Yod*). Then She is concealed from all Her forces and camps, and She says, '*Black am I,*' for there is no white inside this letter, as there is in other letters. This is the meaning of *Black am I*—'and I have no room to bring you in beneath My wings.'[119]

"*Like the tents of Kedar*—we have learned: This is ז (*zayin*), which contains no white within.[120]

"*Like Solomon's curtains*—this is ו (*vav*).[121]

"Therefore, *You will not see me*—'You cannot see anything in Me, since I am a tiny point.'[122]

"What do mighty warriors, Her legions, do? They roar like mighty lions, as is said: *The young lions roar for prey* (Psalms 104:21). Because of the sounds and mighty roars emitted, like lions, by the mighty warriors, the Beloved above hears, and He knows that His Beloved is as passionately in love as He is, until none of Her image or beauty can be seen.[123]

"Then, through the sounds and roars of Her mighty ones, Her dear Beloved emerges from His palace with many gifts and many presents, with fragrances and spices, and comes to Her and finds Her nearly dead, with no image or beauty at all. He approaches Her, embraces Her and kisses Her, until gradually She is revived by the fragrances and spices. By the joy of Her Beloved at Her side, She is restored and—through Her adornments, Her image, and Her beauty—transformed into ה (*he*), as originally.[124]

"This, *the mighty in strength* have done for Her, restoring Her to Her image and beauty, for their might and power have caused this. Thus, *mighty in strength*, עושי (*osei*), *fulfilling, His word—osei, actualizing, His word*, surely, mending it, restoring it to its original image.[125]

"From here on—once She has been restored, becoming beautiful in Her image as originally—they and all the other forces stand ready to hear what She says, and She stands like a king among Her legions. This is *osei, actualizing, His word*, surely!

“Similarly below, when the wicked appear in a generation, She cringes and diminishes Herself until nothing of Her whole image is seen but a single point. When *the mighty in strength* and the truly virtuous arrive, they, as it were, actualize this *word*—She is gradually illumined, and transformed in Her image and Her beauty as originally.”[126]

The Companions came and kissed him. Rabbi El’azar said, “If the prophet Ezekiel had said this, it would have been a wonder in the world!”[127]

Rabbi El’azar took him and kissed him as before.

The child said, “I will bless.”[128]

They replied, “You are blessed, and it is fitting for you to bless.”

He said, “How holy you are! How many blessings are destined for you from the Holy Mother because you have not prevented me from blessing!”[129]

He opened, saying, “*He who withholds grain—the nation will curse him; but there will be blessing on the head of the provider* (Proverbs 11:26). This verse in Torah is to be understood literally. However, we have learned: Every person is obligated to recite Grace after Meals, and if he doesn’t know how, then his wife or his children say the blessing for him. But may a curse fall upon the man who doesn’t know how to bless and needs his wife and children to bless for him.[130]

“If he does know, he should train his son and give him the cup to recite the blessing. And whoever prevents him from being trained, *the nation will curse. He who withholds* בר (*bar*), *a son*, from blessing the blessed Holy One and being trained in *mitsvot*—יקבוהו לאום (*yiqqevuhu le’om*), *the nation will curse him*. The verse should read יקבהו (*yiqqevehu*), *it will curse him*, or יקבוהו לאומים (*yiqqevuhu le’umim*), *nations will curse him*, since לאום (*le’om*), *nation*, is singular, as is said: ולאום מלאום (*U-l’om mi-l’om*), *Nation over nation, shall prevail* (Genesis 25:23). Why יקבוהו לאום (*yiqqevuhu le’om*), *the nation will curse him*? Well, it is spelled לאם (*la-’em*), *to the Mother—*

to the Holy Mother, *they will curse him*, namely this person who prevents his *bar, son*, from blessing the blessed Holy One.[131]

"I'm my mother's only son. Give me the cup, and I'll bless the Holy King, who has brought to my mother's house valiant men, before whom I've spoken powerful words, besting them. So I will bless! But before that, let the verse be resolved to perfection—this one [191b] we began with.

"*He who withholds* בר (*bar*), *grain, the nation will curse him—He who prevents bar, a son*, as has been said, יקבוהו לאם (*yiqqevuhu la-'em*), *they will curse him to the Mother*. What is meant by *yiqqevuhu*? As is said: ויקב בן האשה הישראלית (*Va-yiqqov ben ha-ishah ha-yisre'elit*), *The son of the Israelite woman pronounced, the Name* (Leviticus 24:11). Here, too, *yiqqevuhu, they will designate him*—specifying him *la-'em, to the Mother*, detailing his sins to the Holy Mother.[132]

"*But there will be blessing on the head of the provider*—on the person who trains his son to bless the blessed Holy One, and trains him in the commandments of Torah.

"Mystery of the matter is written in the mystery above: *What is his name, and what is the name of his son, if you know?* (Proverbs 30:4). That name is well-known: *YHVH Tseva'ot is His name* (Isaiah 47:4). *The name of his son*—Israel is His name, as is written: *My son, My firstborn, is Israel* (Exodus 4:22).[133]

"All the keys of faith dangle from this Israel, and He glorifies Himself, saying, *YHVH said to me, 'You are My son'* (Psalms 2:7). Certainly so, for Father and Mother have crowned Him and blessed Him with many blessings, and commanded all: *Kiss the son* (ibid., 12)—kiss the hand of this Son. He has, as it were, been given dominion over all, so that all will serve Him.[134]

"*Lest He rage* (ibid.)—for they have adorned Him with Judgment and Compassion; Judgment for one deserving of Judgment, Compassion for one deserving of Compassion.[135]

“All blessings of above and below reach this Son, adorning Him, and whoever withholds blessings from this Son will have his sins specified before the Holy King—לאם (*la-’em*), *to the Mother*, really![136]

“*But there will be blessing* לראש משביר (*le-rosh mashbir*), *on the head of the provider*—whoever recites the blessing and invites the one who should be invited with the cup of blessing, thereby smashes the Other Side, who is overwhelmed, while the Side of Holiness ascends. This is what is written: *But there will be blessing on the head of mashbir, the smasher*. Just as he elevates and blesses the blessed Holy One and causes the Other Side to be shattered, so the blessed Holy One draws blessings upon him from above, and the one called Blessing settles upon his head.[137]

“Now, Companions, give [the cup of wine], and we will bless.”[138]

They gave him the cup, and he blessed. All the Companions were in joy; for since the day of Rabbi El’azar’s wedding celebration, the Companions had not delighted as on the day that they sat there.[139]

They rose early and blessed him joyously, with fervor.

The child said, “You should not depart except with words of Torah, and so we have learned.”[140]

He opened, saying, “*And YHVH was going before them by day in a column of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a column of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and by night* (Exodus 13:21). ויהוה (*Va-YHVH*), *And YHVH*—the accent stands erect above. Why? Well, at that moment, how fine and beautiful was this Bride—who until then had been subjugated in exile, and now was walking with head erect among Her cohorts in joy! Surely, the accent stands erect above![141]

“*Was going before them* יומם (*yomam*), *by day*—until here, it is not known whether this Bride was going before them or not, since the accent interrupts at *Va-YHVH, And YHVH*. Well,

She was there; but the one going before them was the Supernal Elder, Master of the House, to whom the blessed Holy One swore. And who is that? Abraham, as is written: יומם (*Yomam*), *By day, YHVH directs* חסדו (*ḥasdo*), *His love* (Psalms 42:9); and it is written: *Were it not for My covenant yomam, with day, and night* (Jeremiah 33:25)—the day encompassing all days; the day of other days, all other days, surely! So it is called יומם (*yomam*), *their day*, and not יום (*yom*), *day*. Thus, *Yomam, Their day, was going before them*. He went before them by day, and the Bride went by night, as is written: *and by night in a column of fire to give them light*—this is the Bride; each one fittingly.[142]

"As for you, Companions, may יומם ולילה (*yomam va-lailah*), *their day and night*, be before you at all times."[143]

They kissed him and blessed him as before, and went their way.

They came to Rabbi Shim'on and told him the episode. He was astonished and said, "How worthy he is—but he attains no name! When a thin stick flares, it flares momentarily, and is immediately extinguished, subsiding. Furthermore, I've already said where this light came from."[144]

He opened, saying, "*Mighty upon earth his seed shall be; the generation of the upright shall be blessed* (Psalms 112:2). When a person is *mighty upon earth—mighty* in Torah, *mighty* over his impulse, *mighty upon earth*, surely!—his light ascends, and an abundant flow streams into him; then, *the generation of the upright* יבורך (*yevorakh*), *shall be blessed*—spelled יברך (*yevarekh*), *he shall bless*."[145]

Rabbi Abba said, "But we've seen children saying sublime words, and later becoming leaders of the world!"[146]

He replied, "If a child says a word or two momentarily, unintentionally, a person can be confident that he will succeed in teaching Torah in Israel. But with this one, whose light endures firmly, with full awareness—not so!

Furthermore, the blessed Holy One yearns to smell the aroma of this apple. [192a] Happy is his share![147]

"Happy are you, O righteous ones, of whom is written *The remnant of the house of Judah shall add root beneath and bear fruit above* (2 Kings 19:30). *Root beneath*—like his father, who has departed from the world and is *root beneath* in the Heavenly Academy. *And bear fruit above*—in the Supreme Academy. How fine are root and fruit![148]

"Were it not for the fact that I would be accusing the blessed Holy One, who yearns to smell his aroma, no one would be able to prevail over him. But may it be the Will that his mother should not experience any suffering because of him."[149]

And so it was.

He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the River, [*in his people's land, to invite him, saying, "Look, a people has come out of Egypt. Look, it has covered the eye of the land, and it is encamped*] *opposite me"* (Numbers 22:5). Here are twenty-eight words, corresponding to twenty-eight levels of sorcerous witchcraft with a bird.[1]

One should ponder: Whoever wished to speak with Balaam and collaborate with him, why did he send to him immediately—before approaching him—explicit words, saying *Look, a people has come out of Egypt. Now, curse it for me*? He should have first joined with him, ingratiating himself and bribing him, and then conveying his words.[2]

Well, Rabbi Yose said, "From here we discover that Balak knew the intention of that wicked one, who always sought to glorify himself with grandiose deeds—and whose desire was fulfilled only when he perpetrated evil.[3]

"Balak performed sorcery, enacted witchcraft, and arranged a bird—and he knew that Moses' rungs were lofty and precious. He enacted witchcraft and performed sorcery, and he knew that Balaam's rungs corresponded to them. Immediately, *He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor*.[4]

"פתורה (*Petorah*), *At Pethor*—the name of the place, as is said: *from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse you* (Deuteronomy 23:5). Why is it called so? Because it is written *who set a table for Gad* (Isaiah 65:11), and פתורא (*petora*), a table, was arranged there all of [Balaam's] days. For it is certainly so, that a table is arranged with food and drink before evil aspects, and they perform sorcery and

offer evil incense in front of the table, and all impure spirits gather there and inform them about whatever they inquire. All sorcery and witchcraft were present on that table, so that place was called *Petora*, since in Aram-naharaim a table is called *petora*."[5]

He opened, saying, "*You shall make a table of acacia wood* (Exodus 25:23), and it is written: *You shall set on the table the Bread of the Presence, before Me continuously* (ibid., 30). All those holy utensils before Him, to draw the Holy Spirit from above to below. That wicked Balaam prepared similarly for the Other Side, arranging a table with bread that is called *defiled bread* (Malachi 1:7), as has been said. For so the Other Side follows holiness, like a monkey after humans. And King Solomon cried out: *For what man is there who can follow the king, that which he has already done?* (Ecclesiastes 2:12). This verse has already been mentioned.[6]

"Come and see: It is written *O YHVH, when You came forth from Seir, when You strode from the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the very heavens dripped, the clouds, O they dripped water* (Judges 5:4). When the blessed Holy One wished to give the Torah to Israel, He went and invited the children of Esau, and they did not accept it—as is said: *YHVH from Sinai came and He shone from Seir upon them* (Deuteronomy 33:2), and they refused to accept it. He went to the children of Ishmael, and they refused to accept it, as is written: *He radiated from Mount Paran* (ibid.). Since they refused, He returned to Israel; so we have learned.[7]

"Now a question should be raised—and we have already learned that it is no sin when a person scrutinizes the details of Torah and asks his questions to elucidate its words. This verse is unsettled, and one should ask: When the blessed Holy One came to Seir, to which of their prophets did He appear? And when He went to Paran, to which of their prophets did He appear? If you say that He

revealed Himself to all of their people, we never find this except for Israel alone and through Moses.[8]

"And, as has already been said, the verse should read as follows: *YHVH to Sinai came and He shone to Seir upon them; He radiated to Mount Paran*. Why *from Seir upon them*, and why *from Mount Paran*? All must be known and examined. I have already asked and have not heard and do not know."[9]

When Rabbi Shim'on came, [Rabbi Yose] approached and asked about the matter as before.

He replied, "This question has already been discussed. *YHVH from Sinai came*—as is said: *Look, I am coming to you in the utmost cloud* (Exodus 19:9), and *from Sinai He came* and revealed Himself to them.[10]

"And He shone from Seir [192b] *upon them*—from what the children of Seir said, refusing to accept it; from this He illumined Israel, lavishing them with light and great love. Similarly, *He radiated* and illuminated *from Mount Paran*—from what the children of Paran said, refusing to accept it. From this, Israel gained greater love and radiance fittingly.

"As for your asking 'Through whom did He reveal Himself to them?'—come and see: it is a sublime mystery, and through you the matter is revealed. Torah issued from the supernal mystery of the head of the concealed King. When it reached the left arm, the blessed Holy One saw bad blood accumulating in that arm. He said, 'I must purge and cleanse this arm; if that bad blood does not diminish, it will damage all. Surely, every defect must be eliminated from here.'[11]

"What did He do? He summoned Samael, who then came before Him. He said to him, 'Do you want My Torah?'[12]

"He asked, 'What's written in it?'

"He replied, '*You shall not murder* (Exodus 20:13).' The blessed Holy One skipped to the necessary place.[13]

"He said, 'Heaven forbid! This Torah is Yours, and Yours it will remain. I don't want this Torah.'

“He went on pleading before Him, saying, ‘Master of the Universe, if You give it to me, my whole dominion will vanish, for look, my dominion is over killing—and there will be no wars—and my dominion is over the planet Mars. If so, all this will be abolished from the world![14]

“‘Master of the Universe, take Your Torah, and let me have no share or portion in it! But, if it pleases You, here is the people descended from Jacob—for them it is fitting.’ And he thought he was uttering slander against them.[15]

“This is *He shone from Seir upon them—from Seir*, precisely, light radiated to Israel. Samael thought, ‘Surely, if Jacob’s children accept this, they will vanish from the world and never gain dominion!’[16]

“[Samael] responded to Him several times similarly. [The blessed Holy One] said to him, ‘You are the firstborn, and for you it is fitting.’[17]

“He replied, ‘Look, my birthright is his! It was sold to him, and I consented.’[18]

“He said to him, ‘Since you want no share in it, remove yourself from it entirely.’[19]

“He replied, ‘Fine.’

“He said to him, ‘Since it is so, give Me advice about what I should do, so that Jacob’s children will accept it, as you say.’

“He replied, ‘Master of the Universe, they must be bribed. Take some light from the radiance of the powers of heaven and bestow it upon them, and thereby they will accept it—and here, mine will be first.’

“He stripped off the radiance covering him and gave it to Him to give to Israel, as is written: *He shone* משעיר (*mi-se’ir*), *from Seir, upon them—from Seir*, precisely, namely Samael, as is written: השעיר (*Ha-sa’ir*), *The goat, shall bear upon it* [*all their iniquities*] (Leviticus 16:22).[20]

“*Upon them*—upon Israel.

“Once He eliminated this, removing the bad blood from the left arm, He turned to the right arm and saw that it was

similar. He said, ‘This arm, too, must be cleansed of bad blood.’[21]

“He summoned Rahab, and said to him, ‘Do you want My Torah?’[22]

“He replied, ‘What’s written in it?’

“He skipped ahead and said, ‘*You shall not commit adultery* (Exodus 20:13).’[23]

“He replied, ‘Woe, if the blessed Holy One transmits this legacy to me—an evil legacy, which will eliminate my whole dominion; for I have obtained a blessing of waters, a blessing of the fish of the sea, as is written: פרו ורבו (*Peru urvu*), *Be fruitful and multiply* [*and fill the water in the seas*] (Genesis 1:22), and similarly: *He will be* פרא (*pere*), *a wild ass of, a man* (ibid. 16:12).’[24]

“He began to plead before Him, saying, ‘Master of the Universe, we issued as two sons from Abraham! Here are the children of Isaac; give it to them, for whom it is fitting.’[25]

“He replied, ‘I cannot, for you are the firstborn, and for you it is fitting.’

“He began to plead, saying, ‘Master of the Universe, my birthright will be his; and this light that I have thereby inherited, take and give to them.’

“And so He did, as is written: הופיע (*Hofi’a*), *He radiated, from Mount Paran*.[26]

“Why is it written concerning Samael, וזרח (*Ve-zaraḥ*), *and He shone*, whereas concerning Rahab it is written differently: *Hofi’a, He appeared*? Well, with the light that Samael stripped from himself, He took the sword and the killing—to kill by judicial sentencing, to kill properly—as is written: *your triumphant sword* (Deuteronomy 33:29), although it was not yours. And with the blessing that Rahab stripped from himself, He took a little, like someone to whom a little of his blessing appears, to enable [Israel] to be fruitful and multiply. Thus, *hofi’a, He appeared, from Mount Paran*, and it is not written *ve-zaraḥ, and He shone*.[27]

“Once He had obtained these gifts for Israel from those ruling princes, He came and summoned all [193a] the *myriads of holy ones* (Deuteronomy 33:2), appointed over the other nations. They replied to Him similarly, and from all of them He received and obtained gifts to bestow upon Israel.[28]

“This may be compared to a doctor who had one vial full of a vivifying drug, which he kept for his son. He wanted to give his son that vivifying ointment. The doctor was wise, and he said, ‘There are bad servants in my house. If they know that I am giving this present to my son, it will be evil in their eyes, and they will seek to kill him.’

“What did he do? He took a little bit of deadly poison and put it on the opening of the vial. Then he called his servants and said to them, ‘You are faithful to me; would you like this drug?’

“They said, ‘Let’s see what it is.’ They took a bit to taste, and before even smelling it, they felt that they were about to die. They said to themselves, ‘If he gives this drug to his son, he will die, and we will inherit our master.’

“They said to him, ‘Our master, this drug is fitting only for your son. Here are the wages of our labor; we leave them for you—give them to him as a bribe so that he will take this drug.’

“Similarly, the blessed Holy One is a wise doctor. He knew that if He gave the Torah to Israel before informing [the heavenly princes], they would pursue Israel every day on account of it and kill them. But He did this, and they gave Him gifts and presents so that [Israel] would accept it. All of these Moses received to give to Israel, as is written: *You ascended the heights, you seized captives, you took gifts for humans* (Psalms 68:19). Consequently, Israel inherited the Torah without any challenge or any accusation at all. Blessed is He and blessed is His name forever and forever![29]

“Come and see: These gifts that the Israelites received were their ornaments, by virtue of which neither death nor the Other Side could dominate them. Not only did they obtain the Torah without any challenge at all, but they received gifts and presents from all [the heavenly princes].

“As soon as they sinned, what is written? *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments* (Exodus 33:6)—those *gifts for humans*. What was left of them? Those *captives*, as is written: *You ascended the heights, you seized captives*.[30]

“When they sinned further, what is written? *The Canaanite, king of Arad*, [*who dwelled in the Negeb*,] *heard* [*that Israel was coming by way of Atharim*]; and it is written: *he battled against Israel and took captives from them* (Numbers 21:1). Even so, whenever the people of Israel return to their Father in heaven, those gifts—and everything—are restored to them, enveloping them. And in the time to come, all will be returned, as is written: *YHVH your God will return your captivity and have compassion on you* (Deuteronomy 30:3).[31]

“From here on, utter your words!”[32]

Rabbi Yose said, “*O YHVH, when You came forth from Seir, when You strode from the field of Edom, the earth trembled* (Judges 5:4). When the blessed Holy One returned from Seir, who did not accept the Torah, *the earth trembled*. Why did it tremble? Because it verged on returning to *chaos and void* (Genesis 1:2); for the blessed Holy One had stipulated with the world as follows: ‘If Israel accepts the Torah, fine. But if not, I will return the world to *chaos and void*.’ When the earth saw that the blessed Holy One had invited all the nations to accept the Torah and they had refused—and that of all the nations only Israel alone was left—the earth thought that Israel would similarly refuse; so, *the earth trembled*. When they said *We will do and we will heed* (Exodus 24:7), [*the earth*] *feared, and was still* (Psalms 76:9)—*feared* at first, and finally *was still*.[33]

“Come and see: Because Israel said *We will do*, they do not fear anything that any sorcerers of the world are able to ‘do’—no witchcraft or sorcery in the world. Why? One reason is this; and another is because when the blessed Holy One brought them out of Egypt, He smashed before them all types of witchcraft and sorcery, so that these could not prevail against them. When Balak came, he knew this, and immediately *He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor* (Numbers 22:5). Why is פתורה (*Petorah*), *at Pethor*, mentioned here? Well, so that he would prepare פתורא (*petora*), a table, from which to seek counsel as to what he should do.[34]

“*Which is on* הנהר (*ha-nahar*), *the River*—the verse should read *which is on* נהרים (*naharayim*), *two rivers*; why, *which is on the River*? Certainly so, for it stands constantly upon one river.”[35]

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba were traveling on the way to see Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lekonya, Rabbi El’azar’s father-in-law. They rose at midnight to engage in Torah; they sat down.[36]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Now is the time when the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden to delight with the righteous who are there. What is this delight, and how does He delight with them?”[37]

Rabbi Abba replied, “This matter is a sealed secret, [193b] hidden within me, unknown.”[38]

He said to him, “Were, then, the grand pillars previously in this world empty—neither knowing nor striving to know the basis of their existence in this world, and what awaited them in that world?”[39]

He opened, saying, “*YHVH*, אלהי אתה (*Elohai attah*), *You are my God; I will exalt You, I will praise Your name. For You have done wonders, counsels of long ago, faithful and true* (Isaiah 25:1). This verse constitutes the mystery of faith.

YHVH—supernal mystery, beginning of the supernal point, concealed, unknown.[40]

"However, *Elohai, my God*—mystery of *a voice of sheer silence* (1 Kings 19:12). It is the beginning of what is susceptible to questioning, yet concealed and unknown. Concerning it, no one can answer; for it is sealed, hidden, and treasured away.[41]

"*You*—beginning of what is susceptible to question and answer. It is Priest forever, as is said: *You are priest forever; on My word, Melchizedek* (Psalms 110:4).[42]

"What is meant by *on My word, Melchizedek*? Well, this supernal Priest is the one poised *on* the *word*, since that *word* endures only through the right. And who is that *word*? *Melchizedek* is its name. As for his saying *My word*—because it is linked with David, and all his words of praise reach that *word*, so *My word*. And therefore, *You*—the Priest. We have already established that there are three places, each of which is called *You*.[43]

"*I will exalt You*—all as one.[44]

"*I will praise Your name*—fittingly; this is well known.[45]

"*For You have made* פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*—a covering and garment, clothing the concealed, ancient, hidden light with the cover of another light.[46]

"Alternatively, *For You have made* פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*—*For You have made* אלף (*aleph*). What is meant by *aleph*? We have already learned: 'א ב' (*Aleph, bet*)—אלף בינה (*Elaph binah*), Learn understanding.' But the form of א (*aleph*) is three segments—beginning of supernal mystery of Primordial Adam. For in the form of א (*aleph*) are two arms, one on each side, and a body in the middle. All is one mystery, the mystery of unification, and so א (*aleph*) is numerically one. Thus, *For You have made* פלא (*pele*).[47]

"Rav Hamnuna Sava said as follows: *For You have made* פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*—*pele* is one rung of those חכמה פלאות (*pil'ot ḥokhmah*), wonders of Wisdom. Which one is this? *A path unknown to any bird of prey* (Job 28:7); this is *pele*.[48]

“עצות מרחוק (*Etsot me-raḥoq*), *Counsels from afar*—first he called this פלא יועץ (*Pele yo’ets*), *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:5), whereas here he did not come to enumerate them. But what are *counsels from afar*? Two willow twigs, from which stem all counsel of the prophets; these are all called *counsels from afar*.[49]

“אמונה אומן (*Emunah omen*), *Faithful and true*—two that are one: River and Garden. River issuing from Eden, and Garden watered by it. Here is the whole concealed mystery of faith. [303a][50]

“And I have learned: A person who awakens at night—at the moment when the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden along with the righteous—should say this verse with aspiration of the heart, focusing his awareness on it.[51]

“And afterward, *I praise You, for awesomely and wondrously am I made, wondrous are Your acts, and my soul deeply knows it* (Psalms 139:14). This is the praise of the ancient *ḥasidim* when they awaken at midnight, afterward arranging their praise and engaging in Torah.[52]

“What is the delight of the blessed Holy One? Well, all the righteous, assuming their forms, are clothed in the Garden of Eden every single day. Once they bathe in the dew with which the blessed Holy One intends to revive the dead, they all enter the presence of the Messiah and ask what they ask. This has already been discussed arousingly by the Companions.[53]

“Afterward they all gather and engage in the sublime knowledge of all the Academies there, over which are various ministers, and numerous innovations in Torah are invented there. Afterward they all emerge and see when Elijah comes to the patriarchs. As he emerges, they enter and stand in the presence of the patriarchs, and he delights in them, in the many holy children surrounding them, and they all rejoice.[54]

“When the blessed Holy One enters at midnight, all of them stand fittingly arranged. As for all the effort they exerted that whole day in innovations of Torah—the blessed Holy One yearns for the righteous one who innovated words within her, and He delights in him and delights in those words, and similarly with every single righteous one.

“Afterward they are all enhanced, male and female; and the blessed Holy One—after inhaling their aroma and delighting in them, in all their mysteries of wisdom—reveals Himself to them, and they gaze upon that Beauty of *YHVH*. Then they all rejoice greatly until their light and luster spreads, and from that flow of their lustrous light and joyous light, they generate fruit and verdure for this world, and that fruit enters beneath the wings of *Shekhinah* until it is needed.[55]

“He delights similarly with every single righteous one, and He says, ‘Happy is the king with children such as these, selected as His allotted share!’

“A voice stirs from the middle of the Garden of Heaven, and proclaims powerfully: *Remember, O YHVH, the Edomites, on the day of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Raze it, raze it to its foundation!’* (Psalms 137:7). Then, His dismay and His screaming—and of all the righteous there—are heard in 390 firmaments. Because there is no joy and delight for the blessed Holy One except when the righteous there are standing before Him, and because He swore, saying, *If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither*. [*May my tongue cleave to my palate if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy*] (ibid., 5). Wherever there is joy for the blessed Holy One, this voice issues and proclaims.[56]

“Then from there He emerges, ascending and striking the firmaments, and howling roars until all the forces of heaven are disturbed. Then a wind blows, beating the leaves of that grand Tree, and all its branches beat one another, and a voice stirs from within the canopy of the

Tree, exclaiming, *He remembers His covenant forever—the word He ordained for a thousand generations—which He sealed with Abraham, and His vow to Isaac* (Psalms 105:8–9). As soon as this voice is aroused, Abraham the Elder hears and is aroused; then, a time of favor for the King, and He takes comfort with him.[57]

"At that moment, a certain spirit from the side of the south is aroused, and all favor, joy, and healing are aroused over the world. Then morning rises, and favor prevails, and there is ease for all prisoners of the King who are lying on their sickbed. Happy is the people who can know some of the concealed, sealed mysteries of the Holy King!"[58]

Rabbi Abba said, "One day [303b] I was walking in the desert along with Rabbi Yehudah of Acre, and we entered a certain cave and found there an ancient book from olden days. I opened it and found written there, at the head of its words: *Look, the former things have come to pass, and new things I am declaring* (Isaiah 42:9), and it applied this verse to the souls of the righteous. From the day that an impulse arose in the Will of Thought to create the world, before the world was ever created, all spirits of the righteous were hidden away in Thought before Him, every single one in its image. When He traced the world, they were all revealed, assuming their images before Him in the highest heights. Afterward, He placed them in a certain treasure-house in the Garden of Eden above, and that treasure-house is never full and always exclaims, *Look, the former things have come to pass, and new things I am declaring*. Who is it that *I am declaring*? *I am declaring* all of them by name. And that treasure-house has no desire or yearning but for souls to be poured into it constantly. Just as Hell has no desire or yearning but to receive souls to be purified there, and every day it exclaims, *Give! Give!* (Proverbs 30:15). What is meant by *Give! Give!*? 'I will burn! I will burn!'[59]

"That treasure-house preserves all those souls until the time when it clothes them and they descend to this world.

Due to the sin of Adam, who drew the evil side into the world, those souls must be clothed in this garment, for the blessed Holy One wished to clothe them in another garment. And that book stated, 'Until here. Be silent!'[60]

"From here on, I saw inscribed letters that were unidentifiable, and afterward I saw them in a dream, and I was told, 'Be silent! Reveal this only to the Mighty Rock.' And I did so.[61]

"In it I found stated that the blessed Holy One intends to clothe those souls, in the time to come, in another garment. As for the dead whom Ezekiel revived, why didn't He fashion that garment for them? Well, because the time had not arrived to waft through the world that pure air forming garments, and so He clothed them only as they had existed. So it will be for the revival of the dead, except that the former filth will not be found there.[62]

"When a person departs from this world, all of them—whether righteous, pious, and wholehearted, or sinful and wicked—traverse a path displaying Adam to the inhabitants of the world. From there, each one takes a path either to the Garden of Eden or to Hell.[63]

"All those whose path leads to the Garden of Eden approach the outermost wall of those three walls there. Then one minister emerges suddenly before them, and proclaims, 'Happy are you, O righteous ones! Happy are you in all worlds!' That minister, named Ye'azriel, shows them the way, and they go before him until one gate of Hell. That minister proclaims powerfully, 'Cool the smoke! Cool the blaze!' At that moment it is hurriedly cooled, and they all enter and immerse themselves and pass on. All those wicked ones are delivered into the hand of Dumah and enter Hell, whereas all those righteous ones are delivered only into the hands of this minister.[64]

"Once they immerse themselves and pass on, that minister goes before them until they reach the wall of the Garden of Eden. That minister calls out to the opening,

saying, *Open the gates, so that a righteous nation, keeping faith, may enter* (Isaiah 26:2). Then, the aperture is opened, and he ushers them in, and so with every single opening.

"Once they enter within, to the place where other righteous ones abide, how much joy upon joy, how much delight upon delight among the righteous! All members of the Academy rejoice. After thirty days in which they are concealed in certain chambers, they emerge; breezes waft, and they are all configured in their images. From here on, they inherit a legacy befitting each one.[65]

"The vision seen in the Garden of Eden—from the glorious vision, image of all images, color of all colors of the Holy King—is not revealed in a palace nor in any one place. Rather, an embroidered expanse above the Garden of Eden is opened in four directions, and [the Garden] is filled with glorious holy splendor, manifested there, and all those righteous revel. Who has seen such joy and rapture as that of Beauty of *YHVH*?[66]

"Until here I was permitted to see in that book. As I was maneuvering to see more of this book, it flew out of my hands and I couldn't see it. I was saddened and I cried. I fell asleep there in that cave, and I saw the one robed in a garment. He said to me, 'Rabbi, why are you crying? Do not be distressed about the one whose book that is; it flew away and he took it. Before leaving this world, he treasured it away in that cave in this desert, and now that it has been revealed here to the living, it flew into the air and he grasped it. From here on, go your way.'[67]

"From that day until now, it has not been revealed to me, and I have not been privileged to hear whose it was, and every time I remember I feel sad."

Rabbi El'azar said, "Perhaps, the blessed Holy One, desiring His honor, does not wish it to be revealed in the world."[68]

While they were sitting and studying Torah—these sublime precious words—the day shone. They rose and

went on.

Rabbi El'azar said, "Now is a time of favor for the Holy King. Let us speak words of Torah, engaging in her, and we will participate with *Shekhinah*." [204a][69]

He opened, saying, "*O YHVH, in the morning You will hear my voice, in the morning I will arrange it before You and wait expectantly* (Psalms 5:4). *O YHVH, in the morning*—what is meant by *morning*? Morning of Abraham, as is written: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3); for when morning comes, that Morning of Abraham awakens in the world, and it is a time of favor for all, and to do kindness for the whole world, for both the righteous and the wicked. Then is the time of prayer before the Holy King.[70]

"So, when morning comes, all those prisoners of the King find rest, for it is a time of prayer on their behalf—and all the more so, those who return in *teshuvah*, pleading their request before the Holy King. For at that hour, one chieftain emerges toward the south, with all kinds of healing remedies in his hands. From the south emerges one spirit, and reaches that chieftain, whose name is Raphael, the one appointed over healing. When prayer reaches the blessed Holy One, He instructs His court not to open the trial, because life is in the hand of the blessed Holy One and not in theirs.[71]

"Since it is a time of favor, the blessed Holy One seeks the worthiness of that person. If He finds it, good. If not, He considers him as engaged in *teshuvah* and has compassion on him.[72]

"At that time, the sound of birds is heard weaving their nests, as is said: *where birds make their nests, the stork whose home is the junipers* (Psalms 104:17). They laud and praise the blessed Holy One, and that Doe of the Dawn is aroused over the world, and says *How abundant Your goodness that You have hidden for those who revere You, that You have wrought for those who shelter in You before*

the eyes of humankind! (ibid. 31:20). Then that chieftain goes forth and does all that he is commanded.[73]

"If you say that there are types of healing in his hands, as we have said, not so—for healing is only in the hand of the Holy King! But when the blessed Holy One ordains healing for a particular person, [Raphael] goes forth, and all those accusers appointed over illness fear him. Then the spirit that he obtained from the south he extends to that person, and, look, healing appears! Yet all is in the hand of the blessed Holy One.[74]

"Thus, *O YHVH, morning, You will hear my voice*—and it is not written *O YHVH, in the morning, You will hear my voice*. It is simply because he was speaking to the Morning of Abraham.[75]

"*Morning, I will arrange it before You*—why two *mornings*? Well, one of Abraham, and one, Morning of Joseph, as is written: הבקר אור (*ha-boqer or*), *The morning was light* (Genesis 44:3), which we translate: צפרא נהר (*tsafra nehar*), Morning shone [204b]—נהר (*nahar*), a river, surely![76]

"*I will arrange it before You and wait expectantly*. What is meant by *I will arrange it before You*? Well, I will prepare Your lamp to be immediately lit, as is said: *I have readied a lamp for My anointed* (Psalms 132:17). It was to the Morning of Joseph that he said this, for after all, the preparation of the lamp is his.[77]

"What is meant by *and wait expectantly*? Surely all inhabitants of the world wait hopefully for the kindness of the blessed Holy One—even the wicked of the world! How is David's praise greater than that of all the world's inhabitants? Well, I asked about this matter, and they replied to me as follows—and it is a word of truth, coming from afar.[78]

"The concealed primordial light created by the blessed Holy One shone until worlds could not bear it. What did the blessed Holy One do? He made a light for His light, clothing

one in the other; and so for the other lights, until all worlds endured vitally—and can bear it.[79]

"Rungs extended and lights were clothed—those are called sublime wings—until reaching this Morning of Joseph, and He absorbs all sublime lights. Since all sublime lights depend on Him, His splendor radiates from one end of the world to the other, until worlds below cannot withstand it.[80]

"David came and arranged a covering for this Morning of Joseph, in which to be garbed, so as to sustain worlds below by arranging this lamp. This is what is written: *Morning, I will arrange before You* ואצפה (*va-atsappeh*), *and I will overlay*—as is said: ויצפהו (*va-ytsappehu*), *He overlaid it, with pure gold* (Exodus 37:2). And since David's thought and praise depend upon that lamp, he said that he would be a covering for this Morning."[81]

Rabbi Abba came and kissed him. He said, "If I set out on the way just to hear this word, it is enough for me!"[82]

As they were going along, a single dove approached Rabbi El'azar; it alighted and was cooing in front of him.[83]

He said to her, "O dove, you have been worthy, always faithful in your missions! Go and tell him, 'The Companions are surely coming to you, and I along with them, and a miracle will transpire for him in three days—and no fear should fall upon him, for we are approaching him in joy."[84]

He went on to say, "I am not very happy. It is very evil in my eye—one full pomegranate that has been given in place of him, and his name is Yose."[85]

That dove left his presence, and they went on.

Rabbi Abba said, "What is this? I'm so amazed at what I've seen!"

He replied, "This dove came to me on a mission from Rabbi Yose, my father-in-law, who is on his sickbed—and I know that he has been saved, and a substitute has been provided for him, and he is being healed."

As they went along, there was suddenly a raven standing in front of them, calling out powerfully and crowing great crows.

Rabbi El'azar said, "For this you exist, and for this you were prepared. Go on your way, for I already know."[86]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Companions, let us go and bestow kindness on a pomegranate that was entirely full—Rabbi Yose of Peki'in. For he has departed from this world, and there is no one worthy of attending to him, and he is near us."[87]

They turned from the road and went there. As soon as all the townspeople saw them, they came out to greet them, and these Companions entered there.[88]

Rabbi Yose had a little son, and he would not let anyone approach his bed—and he alone was right next to him, crying over him, mouth clinging to mouth.[89]

That child opened, saying, "*If a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way, in any tree or on the ground—fledglings or eggs—and the mother crouching over the fledglings or over the eggs, you shall not take the mother together with the children. Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself, so that it may go well with you* (Deuteronomy 22:6–7)."[90]

That child was moaning and weeping. He said, "Master of the Universe, we were two—myself and my little sister. You should have taken us and fulfilled the law of Torah![91]

"And if You say, 'It is written אם (*em*), *mother*, and not אב (*av*), *father*'—he was everything: father and mother! Mother died—You took her from the children. Now, father, who was protecting us, has been taken from the children. Where is the justice?"[92]

Rabbi El'azar and the Companions wept at the sound of that child's weeping and moaning.

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*The heavens for height and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings, unfathomable* (Proverbs 25:3)."[93]

While Rabbi El’azar was uttering this, a pillar of fire suddenly separated them, and that child clung to his father’s mouth; they were inseparable.[94]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Either the blessed Holy One wishes to perform a miracle for us, or He wants no one else to attend to him. But for that child—I cannot bear the tears!”

While they were sitting, they heard a voice [205a] saying, “Happy are you, Rabbi Yose, for the words of this little kid and his tears have ascended before the Throne of the King, and judgment has been rendered, and thirteen people of the world have been designated by the blessed Holy One for the Angel of Death on behalf of you. And look, twenty-two years have been added to your life, until you teach grain to this perfect little goat, beloved in the sight of the King!”[95]

Rabbi El’azar and the Companions rose, and they did not allow a single person to remain in the house. They saw that pillar of fire ascending, and Rabbi Yose opened his eyes, and that child was clinging mouth-to-mouth.[96]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Companions, happy is our share, for we have seen revival of the dead eye-to-eye!”[97]

They approached him, and that child was sleeping like someone who has expired from this world. They said, “Happy is your share, O Rabbi! Blessed is the Compassionate One, who has performed a miracle for you due to the moaning and weeping of your son and his words. For thereby he pushed with beautiful words against the Gate of Heaven; his tears and his words have added life to you!”[98]

They took that child and kissed him and wept over him. And they didn’t tell him immediately, but later on. They rejoiced there for three days, and together with that Rabbi Yose they invented many innovations of Torah.[99]

Rabbi Yose said to them, “Companions, from that world I am not permitted to reveal anything I have seen until twelve years have passed. But the 375 tears that my son

shed were counted in the presence of the Holy King. And I swear to you, Companions: the moment he opened with that verse, moaning those words, 300,000 benches in the Heavenly Academy trembled—all of them rising before the Holy King, seeking compassion for me—and they offered themselves as surety for me.[100]

"And the blessed Holy One was filled with compassion for me, and those words were pleasing to Him—how he surrendered his soul for me. There was one fine Guardian in His presence, and he said, 'Master of the Universe, behold what is written: *From the mouth of babes and sucklings You have founded strength on account of Your foes, to put an end to enemy and avenger* (Psalms 8:3). Sufficient for You are the merit of Torah and the merit of that boy who surrendered his soul for his father in a powerful argument.'[101]

"Then the blessed Holy One summoned the Angel of Death and provided surety Himself. What surety did He give him? Thirteen people. And he will return after twenty-two years, for there is no surety before him; rather, pledges that were in his hands return to him. Now, Companions, because the blessed Holy One has seen that you are truly virtuous, a miracle has been wrought before your eyes. Happy are you!"[102]

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, "*YHVH puts to death and brings to life, brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6). This verse should be examined. Does *YHVH* really *put to death*? Look, His Name is an elixir of life for all, and in it death is not found! Everywhere, His Name gives life to the whole world. What is meant by *YHVH puts to death*? Inhabitants of the world think that He kills all human beings. However, *YHVH puts to death*, surely! How does He *put to death*? You might say, 'Because He departs from a person—for as long as He settles upon him, all the accusers of the world cannot harm him; and the moment He departs

from him, all the accusers immediately overpower him and the person dies.’[103]

“Not so! Rather, *YHVH puts to death*. Whom does He *put to death*? That flow of the evil Other Side. For as soon as the flow of the evil side sees the splendor of His Glory, it immediately dies—and has no existence for even a single instant. As soon as that flow of the Other Side dies and is eliminated, immediately *He brings to life*. Whom? That spirit—flow of the side of Holiness. *He brings* it *to life*, establishing its full existence. All simultaneously.[104]

“As for the wording *brings down to Sheol and raises up*, He *brings down* that holy spirit *to Sheol*, immersing it there to be purified, and it immediately rises and enters its appropriate place in the Garden of Eden.[105]

“As for me, Companions, the moment I departed from the world, my spirit immediately expired—for a short while until the blessed Holy One revived it—and the body was dead. When my son opened with those words, his soul flew away and met my soul, rising from purification, and I entered the place I entered, where judgment was rendered.[106] [205b]

“From now on, I should occupy myself with what I have seen, for I should not become occupied with matters of this world—since I have seen what I have seen, and the blessed Holy One wants me not to forget anything.”[107]

He opened, saying, “*YHVH chastised me severely, but to death did not deliver me* (Psalms 118:18). King David said this concerning all that had befallen him in this world, and he expressed the confidence he had in that world. Concerning all that had befallen him in this world: how they pursued him, and how he fled to foreign places—the land of Moab, the land of the Philistines—from all of which the blessed Holy One saved him, not abandoning him to death. Concerning confidence in that world, David said, ‘If I have sinned here against the blessed Holy One, here I have been struck and I received my punishment; He purified me from

all that I sinned, and He will not leave my punishment to that world after death. Surely, *YHVH chastened me severely* in this world, in order to cleanse me; *but to death did not deliver me*, to take revenge against me.' And as for me, the blessed Holy One cleansed me once; from here on, I must not be shamed in the world that is coming."[108]

That child, his son, opened, saying, "*Our father died in the desert, and he was not part of the group that banded together against YHVH along with Korah's group; rather, for his own sin he died* (Numbers 27:3). אבינו (*Avinu*), *Our father*—look, the accent is above, lengthening the word and extending it! O, holy pious ones, how extended the suffering in calling out *Our father*. There is no suffering, no pain of spirit and soul, except when this is called out: *Our father*, with pain of the heart.[109]

"*Died in the desert*. Now, did others not die in the desert, so that he is distinguished like this, by saying that he *died in the desert*? Well, how confused people are about this! Some of them say that he was that wood-gatherer, as is written: *for his own sin he died*, and some say this and some say that. However, I learned as follows—on the day that Father fell onto his sickbed, they taught me this. I myself saw what I saw, which Father ordered me not to reveal. But there were so many thousands and myriads who died *in the desert*—and not for the sin of Korah and not for the sin of the spies, when the decree was issued, but before the Torah was given or after the calf made by those deceivers of the world and those drawn after them.[110]

"However, the plea that those daughters made was that he died במדבר (*ba-midbar*), *on account of speech*. Zelophehad was רב (*rav*), a master, in the house of Joseph, but because he did not know the ways of Torah fittingly, he did not become a chieftain. He was the one who did not guard his mouth and his words toward Moses, and of him is written וימת עם רב מישראל (*va-yamot am rav mi-yisra'el*), *and many people of*

Israel died (Numbers 21:6)—a man who didn't know Torah and yet was *rav*, master, of a clan, master of the seed of the house of Joseph, a descendant of Manasseh.[111]

"Because he sinned *ba-midbar*—by actual speech—they thought that Moses harbored hatred. So they drew near, along with Moses, to Eleazar and all the chieftains and all the heads of clans and the whole assembly; and they didn't speak with Moses, rather in front of them, because they suspected him.[112]

"From here we learn: One who fears a certain judge should bring others forward and increase the number of people before that judge, so that they will hear his judgment, and he will be afraid of them and judge only fittingly. If not, he should be barred from judging.

"But they did not know that *Moses was very humble, more than any person on the face of the earth* (Numbers 12:3). They did not know that Moses was not like that.[113]

"When Moses saw this, he said, 'I see that the whole gathering of the great men of Israel and all the heads of clans and chieftains of the assembly is confronting me!' Immediately, Moses removed himself from the case, as is written: *Moses brought forward their case before YHVH* (Numbers 27:5). Moses said, 'This case is not appropriate for me.' Moses' humility *brought forward their case before YHVH*.[114]

"As for other judges, if they do not take this path, even with a great gathering around them, they are called 'insolent,' having nothing at all of Moses' humility. Happy is the share of Moses!"

Rabbi El'azar and the Companions rejoiced.

That child said, "I return to earlier matters. *Our father died in the desert*. אבינו (*Avinu*), *Our father*—they revealed to me that a serpent was dangling on his neck, extending its tail in that tonal accent drawn above. *Died* במדבר (*ba-midbar*)—died by utterance of his mouth."[115]

That child became very agitated, clutched his father's neck, and wept, saying, "Zelophehad died by speech—and you, Father, returned to the world by speech!"[116] [206a]

He embraced him and kissed him.

The Companions all wept, and his father along with them. They all lifted him up and kissed him on his mouth and his head and his eyes, and his father wept along with him.

Rabbi El'azar said, "My son, since you have spoken, what is meant by *rather*, בחטאו (*ve-ḥet'o*), *for his own sin, he died*?"[117]

He replied, "Father, Father, one word is enough for them! Since that serpent is wound around his tail above, he extends the tonal accent בחטאו (*ve-ḥet'o*), *by his sin*. What is meant by *by his sin*? *By the sin* of that serpent, not by the sin of any other. And what is that? Utterance of the mouth: *rather, by his sin he died*. The tonal accent that is a flow of the serpent, wound around his head—*ve-ḥet'o, by his sin*, surely!"[118]

Rabbi El'azar clasped him to his potent breast between his arms, and all the Companions wept with him.[119]

He said to them, "Rabbis, leave me with my father, for my spirit is still unsettled."[120]

Rabbi El'azar said to Rabbi Yose, "Tell me, how many days and years old is this boy?"

He said to them, "Companions, I beg of you—do not ask this, for five years have not yet come upon him."[121]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Heaven forbid! For with a good eye I am gazing upon him. *Five years without plowing and harvest* (Genesis 45:6), and may you never harvest him."[122]

Rabbi El'azar said to Rabbi Abba, "Let us stay here for seven days, so that the house becomes settled, for all seven days after the soul leaves the body, she goes about naked. And now that she has returned, she is not yet settled in her place until seven days."[123]

Rabbi Abba said, “*You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor, and to your pauper in your land* (Deuteronomy 15:11). This verse we have already learned—that a person should not abandon his own poor and take another one. Look, Rabbi Yose, your father-in-law is on his sickbed! Let us go and be kind.”[124]

He said, “Certainly so! And after we return, we will enter here. As long as we happen to be upon this path, we will enter to see revival of the dead.”[125]

They kissed the child and blessed him; they left and went on.

Rabbi El’azar said, “I am amazed at the children of this generation, how mighty is their power! They are magnificent soaring cliffs.”

Rabbi Abba said, “Happy is the share of the old man, master of the generation! For in his days, the blessed Holy One wishes to establish His two Academies, and to make them a grand and lofty habitation fittingly. For there will not be a generation like this until the time when King Messiah comes.”[126] They went on.

As they were going along, Rabbi Abba said, “We have learned: ‘For eleven things, leprous plagues come upon people. These are as follows: For idolatry, for cursing the Name, for sexual licentiousness, for stealing, for the evil tongue, for false testimony, for a judge who perverts justice, for swearing falsely, for encroaching on the boundary of one’s neighbor, for conceiving evil thoughts, and for *fomenting strife among brothers* (Proverbs 6:19). And some say, for the evil eye.’[127]

“All of them we have learned in our Mishnah. How do we know about idolatry? As is written: *Moses saw the people, that it was* פרוע (*pharu’a*), *loose, for Aaron had let them loose* (Exodus 32:25). What is meant by *that it was pharu’a, loose*? That they had been struck with leprosy. Here is written *that it was pharu’a, loose*; and it is written

concerning the leper *His clothes shall be torn and his hair* פרוע (*pharu'a*), *disheveled* (Leviticus 13:45).[128]

"And about cursing the Name, as is written of Goliath the Philistine: *This day* יסגרך יהוה (*yesaggerekha YHVH*), *shall YHVH give you over, into my hand* (1 Samuel 17:46), and it is written: והסגירו הכהן (*ve-hisgiro ha-kohen*), *the priest shall confine him* (Leviticus 13:5)."[129]

Rabbi Abba said, "This matter is not settled, and it must be examined."[130]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Certainly so! This Philistine was close to the lineage of Ruth and was the son of Orpah, which corresponds to ממערות (*mi-me'arot*), *from the caves of, the Philistines* (1 Samuel 17:23), for they made his mother like a cave. Since it is written *The Philistine cursed David by his gods* (ibid., 43), David gazed at him with an evil eye; and wherever David was gazing with an evil eye, all types of leprosy flowed from his eye. So it was with Joab: as soon as he gazed at him with an evil eye, what is written? *May there never lack in the house of Joab a sufferer of discharge and a leper*… (2 Samuel 3:29).[131]

"Here, with the Philistine, as soon as he cursed the Name, David gazed at him with the evil eye, and saw that his forehead had become leprous. Immediately, *the stone sank into his forehead* (1 Samuel 17:49). All was included: an evil eye of leprosy sank into his forehead, and an actual stone sank into his forehead. Surely he was a leper.[132]

"As for the wicked Balaam, evil sinner, [206b] his eye was the opposite of David's. As for David, his eye was woven of all kinds of colors. There was no eye of the world as beautiful to see as the eye of David—all colors of the world sparkling within it, and all in love toward anyone fearing sin, as is written: *Those who fear You see me and rejoice* (Psalms 119:74)—'they rejoice when they see me.' And all the wicked feared him.

"The eyes of Balaam the wicked—evil eye entirely. Wherever he gazed, a flame destroyed it; for there is no evil

eye in the world like that wicked one's, the opposite of David's eyes.[133]

"About sexual licentiousness, as is written: *YHVH will afflict the pates of the daughters of Zion with scabs* (Isaiah 3:17), and it is written *for swelling and for scab* (Leviticus 14:56).[134]

"About stealing, as is written: [*It shall lodge inside his house*] *and consume it—its timbers and its stones* (Zechariah 5:4). What is the thing that destroys timbers and stones? You must admit, צרעת (*tsara'at*), leprosy—as is written: *The house shall be demolished—its stones and its timbers* (Leviticus 14:45).[135]

"About the evil tongue, as is written: *Miriam, and Aaron with her, spoke against Moses* (Numbers 12:1), and it is written: *Aaron turned to Miriam, and, look, she was* מצורעת (*metsora'at*), *covered with leprous scales* (Numbers 12:10).[136]

"About false testimony—because they testified falsely, saying, *These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!* (Exodus 32:4) in a powerful voice, as is written: *A sound of war in the camp!* (ibid., 17). Thus, *they should expel from the camp anyone with leprosy* (Numbers 5:2).[137]

"About a judge who perverts justice, as is written: *Assuredly, as a tongue of fire consumes straw… and their blossom shall blow away like dust…* (Isaiah 5:24). Why? *For they have rejected the Torah of YHVH of Hosts* (ibid.). And פרחם (*pirḥam*), *their blossom*, is nothing but leprosy, as is written: ואם פרוח תפרח הצרעת (*Ve-im paroaḥ tifraḥ ha-tsara'at*), *If the leprosy breaks out* (Leviticus 13:12).[138]

"About encroaching on the boundary of one's neighbor, how do we know? From Uzziah, who encroached on the boundary of priesthood, and it is written *Leprosy broke out on his forehead* (2 Chronicles 26:19).[139]

"About *fomenting strife among brothers* (Proverbs 6:19), as is written: *YHVH afflicted Pharaoh and his*

household with terrible plagues (Genesis 12:17)—for he fomented strife between Abraham and Sarah.[140]

"About the evil eye, how do we know? As has been said. And all of them were in that wicked Balaam.[141]

"Come and see: It is written פתורה (*petorah*), *at Pethor, which is on the River* (Numbers 22:5). What is meant by *on the River*? That he cast the evil eye on that River that abides with Israel, as is written: *Behold, I extend peace to her like a river* (Isaiah 66:12); and he came with that *petorah, at Pethor*, and contended against them."[142]

Rabbi Abba said, "All these things were certainly found in Balaam, but how do we know about sexual licentiousness?"

He replied, "As is written: *Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam's word, led the Children of Israel to betray YHVH in the affair of Peor* (Numbers 31:16). Here is idolatry and sexual licentiousness.[143]

"False testimony, as is written: *and knows the knowledge of the Most High* (Numbers 24:16)—even the knowledge of his donkey he did not know, so how could he have known *the knowledge of the Most High, hearing the sayings of El*?![144]

"He perverted justice, as is written: *Let me counsel you* (Numbers 24:14)—for the case was still being debated, and he gave evil counsel to inflict harm, straying from justice and advising evil against them.[145]

"He encroached on a domain that was not his, as is written: *I have offered up a bull and a ram; the seven altars I have arrayed* (Numbers 23:4).[146]

"*Fomenting strife among brothers*—between Israel and their Father in heaven.[147]

"As for the evil tongue, no one in the world matched him.

"Cursing the Name, as is written: ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (Numbers 23:15).[148]

“All of them were found in him. The evil eye, as has been said, and all was focused on that River of Israel. He cast advice on how to contend against them.[149]

“*In the land of the sons of his people* (Numbers 22:5). Now, don’t we know that it was *the land of the sons of his people*? However, *the land* is a mystery to which all *the sons of his people* cling. [304a][150]

“*Saying, ‘Look, a people has come out of Egypt*’ (ibid.). ‘If you say that you must take up their lineage and genealogy, it is unnecessary. Rather, in a general manner: *a people*. Why? Because that is how their Protector called them many times; so you will not err’—as is written: *Let My people go* (Exodus 5:1), every time.[151]

“‘Furthermore, when you took counsel against them with Pharaoh, with this expression you prevailed against them’—as is written: *Look, the people of the sons of Israel is more numerous and vast than we* (Exodus 1:9). ‘With this very expression now’—as is written: *Look, a people has come out of Egypt*. ‘No one else brought them out; rather, they came out on their own. So you will be able to harm them.’”[152]

“*Look, it has covered the eye of the land* (Numbers 22:5). Some say, Sihon and Og, who were *the eye of the land*. However, when the blessed Holy One brought locusts upon the Egyptians, what is written? *It covered the eye of the whole land, and the land darkened* (Exodus 10:15). Why? Because all the sorcerers and wizards of the world cannot generate sorcery except for one item on one rung at one time, and this nation brought forth a swarm mingled of many species mixed with one another, so that the sorcerers and wizards could not stand before them. This is *It covered the eye of the whole land, and the land darkened*, and here is written *Look, it has covered the eye of the land*. It is certainly so!”[153]

Rabbi Abba said, “Surely, Balaam and Balak were unmatched by any sorcerer or wizard. As for Balaam, his

power and strength were in his mouth and in his eye. As for Balak, his power and strength were in the work of his hands. Each one needed the other, for all types of sorcery in the world are by the mouth and by action, dependent upon them. One had a tongue and no hands, the other had hands and no tongue."[154]

They went on. They reached a certain field, and the sun was extremely strong. They saw that field with beautiful grass and water issuing on every side and numerous trees of the field. There they sat down.

Rabbi El'azar said, "How fine is this place for resting!"

While they were sitting, a huge snake suddenly came in the heat of the sun and passed in front of them.

Rabbi El'azar said to it, "Snake, snake, turn aside from your path, for he has returned [in *teshuvah*] and regrets what he did and will not do so any more!"[155]

The Companions were astounded. Rabbi Abba said, "What is this?!"

Rabbi El'azar said to them, "Be silent!"

He said, "Snake, after they whispered to you, that man felt regret and set his mind to never revert to it. Turn aside from your path."[156]

The snake rose erect, not moving here or there.

He resumed, saying, "Snake, snake, I know what you want. Go back and divert your path; for a wicked Gentile is coming, who inflicted harm on a certain Jew, and he will be asleep, lying in your cave. Go and kill him."[157]

Immediately, that snake resumed darting in front of them.

Rabbi El'azar said, "Companions, if I weren't here, how much harm this snake would have done! For a certain person committed a sinful act, and before he returned [in *teshuvah*] they whispered to it to kill him. Meanwhile, that person reconsidered and felt regret, and he will never revert to this sin. Because of this he was saved from punishment."

The Companions said, “How did you know?”

He replied, “Father gave me a sign, by which I recognized [the snake].”[158]

They said to him, “Granted, the snake, which you recognized. But that person who felt regret and turned back from his sin—how did you know?”[159]

He replied, “As this snake was moving, its scales were rising, its tail erect, and it was going quickly. One spirit was moving toward it and calling before it, ‘Turn back from your way, for that person has turned back and regrets this sin!’

“And the wicked snake did not listen to [the spirit], until they gave it a ransom for that person. For such is the way of that snake, above and below: once it has been given authorization, this snake does not return until completing evil, or it is given a ransom; for the snake does not venture out in vain, once it has obtained authority.”[160]

They replied, “Granted, all this. But the Gentile you mentioned, whom you gave to it in ransom—how did you know?”[161]

He replied, “That spirit who was moving toward it and charming it leaped to my ear and told me.”[162]

They were amazed.

Rabbi El’azar said, “Companions, let us go approach and see, for the snake has already done its deed.”

They rose and approached a certain rock in that field and found that Gentile dead, with that snake wound around his heel, not separating from him, not detaching itself. Afterward it detached itself from his heel and climbed on his neck and wrapped itself around there, and from there it descended to his heel, and would not separate from him.

Next to him they found a purse filled with gold dinars, which he had stolen from a certain Jew on the road, whom he had struck.

Rabbi El’azar took the purse, and said, “Blessed is the Compassionate One, who accomplishes His mission by all!”[163]

They returned to the place where they were sitting.

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*Because you became precious in My eyes, you have been honored and I love you; I give a man in exchange for you and nations in exchange for your life* (Isaiah 43:4). *Because* יקרת (*yaqarta*), *you became precious*—יקר (*yaqar*), *precious*, is required, and the verse should read as follows: *Because you are yaqar, precious, in My eyes*. Why *yaqarta, you became precious*, which implies that he transformed himself into being precious?[164]

"Certainly so! For every person who is guilty [304b] is at first contemptible—an abomination to the blessed Holy One. But if afterward he reconsiders, turning back from his sin, he now becomes precious on his own, and the blessed Holy One proclaims over him, saying, *Because you became precious in My eyes*—you, by yourself, *became precious in My eyes—you have been honored*.[165]

"*And I love you*—for the blessed Holy One has love for no one in the world except for him who turns back from his sin, so *I love you*, since the blessed Holy One has love only for him.[166]

"'But what will I do, since authorization has already been given to the mighty snake to inflict harm? Well, this is the counsel before Me: *I give* אדם (*adam*), *a man, in exchange for you*.' Who is *adam, a man*, that the blessed Holy One gives as ransom in his place? Another sinner, who did not regret his sin. And who will that one be? From the nation of that snake; from its own it will consume, as is written: *I give* אדם (*adam*), *a man, in exchange for you*—do not read אדם (*adam*), *a man*, but rather אדום (*Edom*), *Edom*.[167]

"*And nations in exchange for your life*—this is: *Nation over nation shall prevail* (Genesis 25:23), and this is the seed of Esau, who will be *in exchange for your life*."[168]

While they were sitting, the Jew who had been robbed by the Gentile who was killed by the snake—came on the way,

weary and tired from the way. Due to the strength of the sun, he entered that field and sat beneath a tree, and he was justifying for himself the judgment, saying, “Master of the World, it is revealed and known before You that I care nothing about myself, or about my body or about my money; for whatever You do, You do justly. But my father and mother are old, and I don’t have enough to provide for them, and about this I am concerned.[169]

“And furthermore, beyond all this, a bundle of dinars that was in that purse belonging to a certain poor man, to make a canopy for his poor daughter! What will I do, Master of the World? For this, my heart pains me extremely.”[170]

He wept, and said, “*The judgments of YHVH are true*, יחדיו צדקו (*tsadequ yaḥdav*), *all of them are just* (Psalms 19:10). The judgments of the Master of the World are true. Why are they true? Because *tsadequ yaḥdav, together they are just*. For at the time of Judgment, the blessed Holy One seeks to enact judgments. Numerous shield-bearing warriors stand on one side and the other, justifying each other, locking horns with one another. Once *tsadequ yaḥdav, together they are just*, with one another, concurring as one, then *the judgments of YHVH are true*. When *tsadequ yaḥdav, are they just together*? When all the members of the court above justify [the judgment]. As for me, O Master of the World, for all this I weep, not for what is mine!”[171]

Rabbi El’azar and the Companions heard, and they rose and approached him. They saw him sitting beneath that tree, and they grasped him and welcomed him.

Rabbi El’azar said to him, “Do not fear, O truly virtuous one! For if you were not virtuous, the blessed Holy One would not have performed a great miracle for you, as He just did. Take your purse of dinars—come and see what the blessed Holy One has done for you.”

He went with them and saw that Gentile dead, and the snake was wreaking vengeance on him, wound around his

neck as before.

That Jew prostrated himself in the dust, and thanked and praised the Master of the World. He rose and kissed the hands of Rabbi El'azar and the Companions, and said to them, "Now I know that the blessed Holy One has performed this miracle for your sake! But, Rabbis, for the old father and mother that I have I am weeping, and for a certain poor man who gave me this bundle I am pained."[172]

He opened the purse, and showed them! And he showed them the blow inflicted on him by that Gentile.[173]

Rabbi El'azar prayed for him, and he was healed.

They approached that Gentile as before, and they saw the snake doing as before. Rabbi El'azar said to it, "Snake, snake, all that you have done, you have done well! Furthermore, you have displayed your power and strength upon him, and wreaked much vengeance. We have seen it three times, and I have seen all that you have done. From here on, go and hide away in your cave, and I decree upon you to never again harm any person."

That snake withdrew and bent its head and went away.

Rabbi El'azar said to that Jew, "Take the spoil of your enemy, for look, he has a purse of gold dinars, which that Gentile's son left with his father. And leave him his clothes, and don't take anything of his. And go to the man in such and such a place, and you will find that just that moment his wife died. Go to him and return this purse of dinars to him. Because that man has a son named Shim'on, who was journeying with merchandise on the ocean, and when they were on the ship this Gentile's son stole this purse and gave it to this wicked one. And tell that Jew to put this purse away for his son, who will soon come to him, and to bless the blessed Holy One, who has restored a lost object to its owner."[174]

So he did. He took the purse, and bowed down before Rabbi El'azar and kissed his hands.

The Companions were amazed. Rabbi Abba said, “This whole way there has been wonder in all that we have seen in you, and now, wonder upon wonder! What is this?”

He replied to them, “This matter is not by sign and not by wisdom. Rather, my spirit gazed and I saw, as if seeing eye-to-eye.”[175]

They were amazed. They all went on, with that Jew along with them, until they reached his father-in-law’s house. Once they reached there, they found his father-in-law sitting on his bed and studying Torah. Rabbi El’azar offered a blessing, and the Companions blessed, and he rejoiced in them.[176]

He opened, saying, “*Heal me, O YHVH, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for You are my praise* (Jeremiah 17:14). Since he says *Heal me, O YHVH*, why *and I will be healed*? Since he says *Save me*, why *and I will be saved*? Once the Healer heals, who would strike?[177]

“Well, all healings of the world are in the hands of the blessed Holy One. But some of them are by the hand of a messenger, and some are not transmitted by a messenger. Those transmitted by [305a] a messenger are remedies, but sometimes the illness returns; whereas when He heals, that sickness of ours never returns. So His healing is a healing retaining no sickness at all; thus, *Heal me, O YHVH, and I will be healed—I will be healed*, surely, with no harassment at all. And now, Companions, the blessed Holy One has given me healing and withheld me and become my surety!”[178]

They told him the whole story. He was astounded; he wept and rejoiced. He said, “Companions, I vow that I will go to him and join him, and we will thank and praise the Master of the World.”[179]

He rejoiced with them.

They said to him, “What were you occupied with?”

He replied, “I was engaged in the Portion of Balak, and I saw that his wisdom was more powerful than the wisdom

of Balaam. The wisdom of Balaam, one moment; the wisdom of Balak, all the time. But all keys were in the hand of Balaam because he completed by the mouth; Balak knew how to perform his sorcery, yet not how to complete by the mouth."[180]

He opened, saying, "*As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob; do not be dismayed, O Israel, for I am with you! For I will make an end of all the nations where I have scattered you, but of you I will not make an end! I will chasten you in justice, and will not leave you wholly unpunished* (Jeremiah 46:27–28).[181]

"This verse has been established. However, *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob*—from the witchcraft of Balaam. *Do not be dismayed, O Israel*—by the wizardry of Balak.

"Come and see how both of them were intertwined in evil counsel. Balaam said, 'Jacob was in the house of my grandfather Laban, who enacted sorcery against him and prevailed over him. I, too, will arrange sorcery against him.'[182]

"Balak said, 'And I will arrange wizardry against the name called Israel.'[183]

"At that moment, one wind issued from the side of Joseph, from within branches of the Tree, and it blew against those instruments of sorcery and nullified them. This corresponds to what Joseph said, [*Did you not know*] *that a man like me would surely perform sorcery?* (Genesis 44:15). What is meant by *a man like me*? 'On account of me, there is *a man* who will nullify powers of sorcery for your children. On account of me, He is above.' Thus, *a man like me*—'*like me* there is *a man* above.'[184]

"Another wind issued from within the Tree below and blew against that wizardry and nullified it, corresponding to: *There is wizardry on the lips of a king* (Proverbs 16:10). What is meant by *a king*? This is the Tree below.[185]

“Then Balaam replied, saying, ‘*Surely there is no sorcery in Jacob, no wizardry in Israel* (Numbers 23:23).’ Both of them were on these two sides.[186]

“*For I am with you*. Since the day that the world was created, there have never been days when it was so essential for the blessed Holy One to be together with Israel as at that time when Balaam sought to annihilate Israel from the world. Concerning this, the blessed Holy One said, ‘Balaam seeks to annihilate them from the world, yet I will not do so. Rather, *I will make an end of all the nations where I have scattered you, but of you I will not make an end!* For if all nations come, they will not be able to annihilate you from the world.’

“Laban came first, and sought to eradicate Jacob alone from the world. The blessed Holy One came and shielded him, as is written: *Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or evil* (Genesis 31:24).[187]

“Pharaoh came and sought to annihilate them from the world. The blessed Holy One came and shielded them, as is written: *The more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread* (Exodus 1:12).

“Haman came and sought to annihilate everyone. The blessed Holy One came and shielded them, turning everything back on [Haman’s] head. And so in every single generation, and Israel says, *The loving-kindnesses of YHVH* לא תמנו (*lo tamenu*), *have not ceased, His mercies are not spent* (Lamentations 3:22). The verse should read לא תמו (*lo tammu*), *have not ceased*. However, *The loving-kindnesses of YHVH*—in every single generation, aiding us, so that לא תמנו (*lo tamenu*), *we have not ceased*, and have not been annihilated. Why? Because His mercies were not withheld from us, as is written: *for His mercies are not spent*.[188]

“Come and see: What is written first? *He sent* מלאכים (*mal’akhim*), *messengers, to Balaam son of Beor* (Numbers 22:5). And later it is written: זקני (*ziqnei*), *The elders of, Moab and ziqnei, the elders of, Midian went, with implements of*

divination… (ibid., 7). Scripture should have written *The messengers went*. Why did it change the wording from what is said at first?[189]

"Well, that wicked Balak was cunning in all rungs above—those binding bonds to generate witchcraft and wizardry, and all those higher rungs, by which lower rungs are compelled.[190]

"[Balak] said to [Balaam], 'Whenever we practice wizardry and sorcery, we have certain rungs and angels, recognized by sorcerers and wizards. But from here on, you must search another, lofty place.'

"He wrote him other names on those holy rungs. Such are the ways of wizards and sorcerers: they know the rungs on which that wizardry abides, and they perform their sorcery and bind them by oath to other, higher rungs, and they do whatever they do.[191]

"[Balak] sent to [Balaam] as follows: 'This nation's bond is unlike that of other nations of the world. Their bond is bound in another, lofty place.'[192]

"He wrote and sent him the lineage and the Patron of the twelve prefects surrounding the Chariot wheels of the Holy Throne. He said to him, 'If you gaze, gaze upon these, for these twelve are bound with the twelve tribes. And if you perform sorcery against these, then against their image—twelve tribes, banners unfurled—we can prevail, waging war against them and eradicating them from the world.'[193]

"Thus, *He sent* מלאכים (*mal'akhim*)—*mal'akhim, angels*, surely! And this is: *with implements of divination in their hand* (Numbers 22:5)—the lineage of holy angels they brought in their hands. And [Balak] did not know that all supernal rungs are in the hands of the blessed Holy One. What did Balak think? He thought that the people of Israel had been entrusted to angels, like all other peoples of the world. So he wrote the names of these twelve angels and sent them, corresponding to what is written: *He sent mal'akhim, angels*."[194]

“[Balak] said to [Balaam], ‘Come and see: All the rungs binding [305b] bonds to smash this people come from the side of the north: from the north are they destined to fall. Our rule of sorcery is on the side of the north; now we can wage war against them, for these twelve, bonding with them, begin being counted from the north. Since they begin from the Left, their power is weakened and broken, for all our power is on that side.’ What does Scripture say? *Standing upon twelve oxen: three facing north* (1 Kings 7:25)—beginning to count from the north.[195]

“[Balak] said, ‘Look, our power is on the side of the north, consisting of forty-minus-one rungs, stronger than iron or copper, and those below them are innumerable. So we can wage war and contend against them.’[196]

“But the blessed Holy One did not do so to the Holy People, and did not want to leave them to angels nor to all the powers of heaven, rather to Himself alone. He scattered angels and princes who rule over all other nations—branches spread over them all. Once He came to Israel, He took them Himself and bestowed upon them the canopy, potency of the Tree, and did not leave them in the hands of angels or in the hands of officials and princes of the world. As is written: *When the Most High allotted the nations, when He dispersed humankind, He set the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the Children of Israel* (Deuteronomy 32:8). And those twelve boundaries are set in the four directions of the world. After He distributed branches and leaves, He took Israel and bestowed upon them the potency, canopy of the Tree, as is written: *For YHVH’s share is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance* (ibid., 9).”[197]

Rabbi El’azar said, “How fine and beautifully you have spoken! Happy is our path, for so many sublime holy words we have seen and gained.”

That Jew was there in front of them. He said to them, “Masters, all these words, how fine! Sublime holy words

they are. What about what is written [afterward]: *He found him in a wilderness land, in the emptiness of a howling desert…* (Deuteronomy 32:10)?”[198]

They replied, “If you know something about it, speak! For they have already established this word as pertaining to Abraham, whom the blessed Holy One found in a land of idol worshipers, who did not know faith in the blessed Holy One but rather strayed after idolatry. Abraham rose and sprouted among them—a single complete branch before the Master of the World—and there He found him.[199]

“What did the blessed Holy One do with him? He took that branch and watched over it, watering and tending it assiduously; then He uprooted it from there and planted it in another place, as is written: *Go you forth from your land, from your birthplace, from your father’s house to the land that I will show you!* (Genesis 12:1)—He made of him a Holy People. Indeed, the blessed Holy One ‘found him’ in the world, in a land where they did not believe in Him and did not know who He was.”[200]

That Jew said, “Surely that is lovely, a fine word! But a question may be posed: If Abraham was the supernal image, he is entirely the image and must be the image; for Abraham the Elder came and issued from a supernal place, and Abraham below must be so.[201]

“Furthermore, look, the verse does not prove anything about Abraham at all, and does not mention Abraham or Isaac, but rather Jacob alone, as is written: *For YHVH’s share is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance*, after which is written *He found him in a wilderness land….*”[202]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Even so, there is no difficulty here. For we find that Abraham emerged from idol worshipers; and here, although it is written *Jacob*, it signifies Abraham—so there is no objection to the matter. But if you know something or an innovation, speak!”[203]

That Jew opened, saying, “*The earth was emptiness and void, with darkness over the abyss and the spirit of God*

hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2). *The earth*. Who is *earth*? The *earth* that is recognized above and below.[204]

"*Was* תהו ובהו (*tohu va-vohu*), *emptiness and void*. What is meant by *tohu, emptiness*? This is a green line encompassing the whole world, and it is called קו תהו (*qav tohu*), *a line of emptiness*, as is written: *He will stretch over it* קו תהו ואבני בהו (*qav tohu ve-avnei vohu*), *a line of emptiness and plummet-stones of void* (Isaiah 34:11). *Bohu, void*—as we have learned: 'slimy stones sunk in the abyss, from which issues water.'[205]

"Now, we should realize: This *tohu, emptiness*, which is a green line—who is the green line, and what is the green line? Well, we have found in a doctors' book by Dr. Kirtena, whose name is Yudan of Caesarea—and they called him Dr. Kirtena because he is grand among doctors and precious in wisdom, and in the Persian language they call a venerable person as follows: 'Grand *Qirtena* and Precious in Wisdom.' And he said:

"'*The earth was tohu va-vohu, emptiness and void*. What is meant by *tohu, emptiness*? It is a green line encompassing the whole world. And what is that? Shell of the nut, and this is the outer shell, which is green. Within it is *bohu, void*—those slimy stones from which issues water. From *tohu, emptiness*, are conveyed skin and flesh; from *bohu, void*, are conveyed bones.[206]

"'Within them, *and darkness*—a flow from which derives the nation of Esau.[207]

"'Now, if you say "From *tohu*"—well, certainly so, for *tohu* depends upon *darkness*. However, in between entered those slimy stones, from which derive bones, as has been said. *And darkness*—a slender flow from which Esau derives.[208]

"'*And the spirit of God*—kernel of the nut, from which derives Jacob the Complete.[209]

"'Following this pattern, the mystery that is written: *Here, a stormy wind coming from the north* (Ezekiel 1:4),

corresponding to *tohu*, *emptiness*. Within it, *a great cloud* (ibid.), corresponding to *bohu*, *void*. *And flashing fire* (ibid.)—within it, corresponding to *darkness*. *And a radiance surrounding it* (ibid.)—within it, corresponding to *the spirit of God*. *And from within it, like the color of amber* (ibid.)—within all, corresponding to *hovering over the face of the waters*. This is the spirit of Supernal Mother, hovering over all. And Jacob the Complete is surely the kernel of the nut, and the blessed Holy One *found him in a wilderness land, in tohu, emptiness*, surely. Afterward, He arranged for all those shells to be subjugated to him.'[210]

"Up to here was written in that book of Dr. Kirtena. Afterward, traced in this verse, was all the protection a doctor should provide for one who is ill, lying in the King's prison, so that he may serve the Master of the World.[211]

"For when a wise doctor goes to him, *he finds him in a wilderness land and in tohu, emptiness*—the illnesses imposed upon him. He finds him [306a] in royal captivity.[212]

"Now, you might say, 'Since the blessed Holy One commanded to seize him, no person should attend to him.' Not so! For David has said, *Happy is one who keeps an eye on the helpless; on the day of evil YHVH will deliver him* (Psalms 41:2). *The helpless*—the one lying on his sickbed. And if he is a wise doctor, the blessed Holy One provides him blessings for the one he is attending to.[213]

"And that doctor, if *he finds him in a wilderness land*, lying on his sickbed; *and in the emptiness of a howling desert*, for that sickness oppresses him—what should he do? יסובבנהו (*Yesovevenhu*), *He will encircle him* (Deuteronomy 32:10)—יסובב ליה סיבות (*yesovev leih sibbot*), he should revolve the turn of events for him, and bring about causes, so that those things harming him will be thwarted. He should let and draw out from him bad blood.[214]

"*Give mind to him* (ibid.)—he should examine and understand the origin of that illness, scrutinizing so that it does not intensify; he should diminish it.

“Afterward, *guard him like the pupil of His eye* (ibid.)—so that he will be protected properly with those potions, with those remedies that he needs. And he must not fail to distinguish between them, for if he errs in even one element, the blessed Holy One considers that doctor as if he spilled his blood and killed him.[215]

“For although that person is in the King’s prison, confined there, the blessed Holy One wants someone to attend to him and help him, to take him out of prison.

“[Dr. Kirtena] said as follows: The blessed Holy One renders judgment above upon inhabitants of the world, *whether by death, uprooting, confiscation of property, or imprisonment* (Ezra 7:26). One who deserves *confiscation of property* falls onto his sickbed and is not healed until he gives all that was decreed upon him. Once he has been punished financially and has given all that was decreed, he is healed and leaves prison. Therefore, one must attend to him, so that he will pay his penalty and leave.[216]

“One who deserves *uprooting* will be seized and confined in prison until he is uprooted entirely, and sometimes he will be uprooted of his limbs, or of one of them, and afterward he will be released from prison.[217]

“One who deserves *death*, so it is. For if he gives all the ransom and money in the world, he will not be saved.[218]

“Even so, there must be a wise doctor to attend to him. If he can provide him with healing of the body, fine; if not, he will provide him with healing for his soul and attend to his soul’s healing. Such is a doctor whom the blessed Holy One will attend to in this world and in the world that is coming.”

Rabbi El’azar said, “Until now I have never heard of this doctor or this book—except one time when a certain wandering donkey-driver told me that he heard from his father that in his time there was a certain doctor who, when he looked at a person on his sickbed, would say, ‘This one will live,’ or ‘This one will die.’ They said of him that he was

truly virtuous and sin-fearing, and if anyone could not obtain what he needed, he himself would purchase it, giving of his own. And they said that there was no one in the world as wise as him, and his prayer accomplished more than the work of his hands. And it seems to me that this was that doctor!”[219]

That Jew said, “His book is in my hands, because I inherited it from my grandfather. And all the words in that book are all based on mysteries of Torah, and in it I discovered concealed mysteries and many matters of healing, of which he said that it is not proper for anyone to perform them unless he is sin-fearing.

“And those were what Balaam used, for he murmured incantations over illness; he spoke with his mouth, and [the person] was instantly healed.[220]

“All of them he clarified in that book, and he said, ‘This is forbidden, and this is permitted for one who is sin-fearing.’ For he mentioned many illnesses whose cure depends on murmuring of the mouth, deriving from the side of sorcery and some from the side of wizardry. And all those forbidden to be uttered by the mouth and forbidden to be enacted, he discussed. Eventually I found there that for certain illnesses one must say such and such, and expel that illness by banishment and excommunication. That is quite amazing to me!”[221]

Rabbi El’azar rejoiced, and the Companions rejoiced. Rabbi El’azar said, “If we had that book, we could see what it really is!”

He replied, “I’ll entrust it to you, in order to show it to the Holy Lamp.”[222]

And we have learned: Rabbi El’azar said, “That book was in my hands twelve months, and in it I discovered many sublime precious lights. When we reached those sealed mysteries concerning Balaam, I was astounded.[223]

“One day I was whispering incantations in a certain place, and the letters were ascending and descending, until

I saw in a dream, and they said to me, ‘What are you doing entering and enquiring in a domain that is not yours, where you need not be?’[224]

“I awoke, and I was distressed over those sealed mysteries that were there. I sent for that Jew, who is named Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah, and I gave him the book.[225]

“And in the mysteries of Balaam, I found some of those names of angels, sent to him by Balak, though they were not arranged correctly. But in it I found many types of remedies, prepared according to configurations of Torah and her sealed mysteries. And I saw that it depends on kindness, and prayers and pleas to the blessed Holy One.[226]

“Now if you say that he performed healing with verses of Torah—perish the thought! Rather, he would speak mysteries of Torah, and based on that mystery he would produce mysteries of healing, the likes of which I have never seen. I said, ‘Blessed is the Compassionate One who has enlightened human beings by wisdom above.’[227]

“I grasped some of those matters relating to Balaam, and from them I saw that in the whole world there was no one as wise in sorcery as he. I said, ‘Blessed is the Compassionate One, who has abolished these sorceries from the world, so that human beings will not stray from revering the blessed Holy One.’ [193b][228]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Who killed the wicked Balaam, and how was he killed?

Rabbi Yitsḥak replied, “A verse states explicitly: *Balaam son of Beor, the soothsayer, they killed by the sword* (Joshua 13:22).”[229]

Rabbi El’azar said to him, “I know all this.”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “El’azar, the words of Balaam the wicked were potent, and the Companions have already established what is written: *Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses* (Deuteronomy 34:10), and they

said: ‘*In Israel* none arose, but among the nations of the world one did! Who is this? Balaam.’ We have already established the matter. So if he possessed all this and was so mighty in wisdom—a man who boasted of his great power, as is written: ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (Numbers 23:15); אעקר לכה (*e’qar le-khoh*), ‘I will uproot *Koh*, from here’—how were they able to kill him?[230]

“Well, in the Book of Wisdom of King Solomon it says as follows: There are three signs: jaundice is a sign of sin, words are a sign of foolishness, boasting is a sign of knowing nothing. And the latter outweighs the others—a fool, a sinner, including all.[231]

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *Let a stranger praise you, and not your own mouth* (Proverbs 27:2)—and if there is no *stranger*, then *your mouth*!’ Not so! Rather, if there is no one who recognizes you, open your mouth to utter Torah, conveying words of truth in Torah; then by opening your mouth, they will praise your words and know who you are. For there is nothing in the world that reveals as much about a person as when he opens his mouth; one’s mouth informs people who he is.[232]

“That wicked Balaam boasted about himself in everything. Yet, he deceived people, exalting himself with his words. Out of little, he made much. What he said pertained to those impure elements, and he spoke the truth; but that wicked one was praising himself in a disguised way, elevating himself with his words, because whoever heard thought that he surpassed all prophets of the world—as is written: *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of El and knows* [194a] *the knowledge of Elyon* (Numbers 24:16). Who in the world heard these words from his mouth without thinking that no prophet in the world was as supreme as he?[233]

“It was true, and so it was. *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of El*—so it was. *And knows the knowledge of*

Elyon—so it was. That wicked one spoke about the rungs to which he clung. *One who hears the sayings of El*—a matter of supreme ascension! Yet he said as follows: *One who hears the sayings of* אל (*el*), *a god*. It is not written האל (*ha-El*), *the God*—for surely, *ha-El, the God, His way is perfect* (Psalms 18:31)—but *el, a god*, unspecified, *another god*: *For you shall not bow to another god* (Exodus 34:14). *One who hears the sayings of el, a god*—a minor matter; yet to one who does not know, it seems great and exalted.[234]

"*And knows the knowledge of* עליון (*Elyon*), *the Most High*—above all rungs of defilement, those conducting a ship at sea and a storm. They are forty-minus-one, and that captain by whose hand they are all conducted is *elyon, most high*, above all. To this, that wicked one clung, and he said that he knew *the knowledge of the Most High*—the rung that is *Most High*, above all those conducting the ship. Who could hear this and not become agitated and say that there was no one like him in the world? But that wicked one was praising himself in a disguised way—speaking truthful words while deceiving inhabitants of the world.[235]

"*Who beholds a vision of Shaddai, falling with eyes uncovered* (Numbers 24:16). Whoever heard this thought that [Balaam] saw what no one else in the world has seen. מַחֲזֵה (*Maḥazeh*), *A vision of, Shaddai*—one of those branches issuing from *Shaddai*, and they were punished above and called *maḥazeh*, as is said: ומול מֶחֱזָה אל מֶחֱזָה (*u-mul meḥezah el meḥezah*), *window facing window* (1 Kings 7:5), a branch issuing from there.

"Who is that? Uzza and Aza'el, who are *falling and eyes uncovered*. [Balaam] said that the *maḥazeh, vision of, Shaddai* that he saw was *falling and eyes uncovered*.[236]

"Where was Balaam at that time? If you say in Midian, look at what is written: *Now, I am about to go to my people* (Numbers 24:14)! If he went away, who placed him in Midian? However, when that wicked one saw that twenty-two thousand Israelites fell due to his advice, he lingered

there, demanding his reward. While he was lingering, Phinehas and the captains of the army came there.[237]

"As soon as he saw Phinehas, he flew into the air with his two sons, Yannes and Yambres. If you say, 'How did they not die during the episode of the [Golden] Calf, since they fashioned it?'—it was certainly so, just as is written: *About three thousand men of the people fell on that day* (Exodus 32:28). Now, didn't they know this small number? After all, Scripture knows how to reckon many other high, towering, huge numbers, yet here *about three thousand men*! Well, these were the sons of Balaam, Yannes and Yambres, who were equivalent to *three thousand men*.

"However, that wicked one knew all the sorceries of the world, and he absorbed the sorcery of his sons, who were familiar with it, and with this he flew away.[238]

"Phinehas saw that someone was flying in the air, disappearing from sight. He shouted to the soldiers, 'Is there anyone who knows how to fly after that wicked one, for it is Balaam?' They saw him flying.

"Zaliah, a member of the tribe of Dan, rose and seized the dominion ruling over sorcery, and flew away. As soon as that wicked one saw him, he changed course in the air and penetrated five layers of the atmosphere, [194b] disappearing from sight.

"At that moment, Zaliah was in danger and distress, not knowing what to do. Phinehas shouted toward him, 'Shadow of dragons crouching over all serpents, curl your hair!' Immediately, he knew and discovered that course and approached him. Immediately, [Balaam] appeared, and both of them descended in front of Phinehas.[239]

"Come and see: Of that wicked one is written *He went off* שפי (*shefi*), *smoothly* (Numbers 23:3)—this is the highest of his rungs, a male serpent. Zaliah took two—male and female—and thereby overpowered him, since he seized the dominion ruling over them and they were subjugated to him.

“This was שפיפון (*shefifon*), *a viper, on the path* (Genesis 49:17)—on that *path* taken by the wicked one, as is written: *May Dan be a serpent on the way* (ibid.)—Samson. *A viper on the path*—Zaliah.[240]

“*That bites a horse’s heels* (ibid.)—Ira, who was with David and who came from Dan and whose might was attributed to David, as is written: *David hamstrung all the chariot horses* (2 Samuel 8:4).[241]

“*And its rider topples backward* (Genesis 49:17)—Seraiah, who is destined to come with the Messiah of Ephraim and will be from the tribe of Dan and is destined to wreak vengeance and wage war on the other nations. When this one arises, then you may expect the redemption of Israel, as is written: *Your deliverance I await, O YHVH!* (ibid., 18). Even though this verse has been established, the elucidation of the matter is as has been said [here] and been established. Thus the verse comes, demonstrating this.[242]

“When that wicked one landed in front of Phinehas, he said to him, ‘Evil one, how many evil convolutions have you inflicted upon the Holy People!’[243]

“He said to Zaliah, ‘Come and kill him, but not with the Name; for this one is not worthy of having sublime sanctity mentioned over him—so that his soul, in departing, should not be included in these holy rungs and his utterance be fulfilled: *May my soul die the death of the upright* (Numbers 23:10).’[244]

“At that moment, he performed several types of execution upon him, yet he did not die, until he took a sword engraved with a serpent on either side. Phinehas said to him, ‘With his own, kill him; and with his own, he shall die.’ Then he killed him, prevailing over him.[245]

“For such is the way of that side: whoever follows it dies by it, and his soul departs by it and is absorbed in it. Thus Balaam died, and he is punished severely in that world and was never buried. All his bones rotted, becoming filthy

snakes, harming other creatures; and even the worms that ate his flesh turned into snakes.[246]

"I found in the Book of Ashmedai, which he gave to King Solomon, that whoever wants to perform powerful sorcery, hidden from the eye—if he knows the rock where Balaam fell, he will find some of those snakes formed from the bones of that wicked one. If he kills one of them, with its head he can perform superior sorcery; with its body, other sorcery; with the tail, other sorcery. There are three types of sorcery in every single one.[247]

"When the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, one of the things that she asked him was, 'How is the bone of a snake of three sorceries caught?' Instantly, *there was no question hidden from the king, which he did not tell her* (1 Kings 10:3). She asked about this and needed those snakes, yet she could not seize one of them. How did he respond to her? About matters within her heart; that is how he responded to her, as is written: *The king told her all her heart*. 'Those snakes cannot be overpowered by any inhabitant of the world except with one mysterious element. And what is that? Boiling semen.[248]

"'If you say, "Who is capable?"—well, when a person emits that semen lustfully, he emits it for the sake of that snake in lustful desire. When it issues boiling, it is immediately caught in a certain garment, and that garment is thrown toward the snake. Instantly, [the snake] bends its head and is seized, like a domestic rooster is seized. If one of them were attacked with all battle weapons of the world, it could not be overpowered; but with this, no one in the world needs weapons or anything else, and one doesn't have to be wary of them, since they all submit to him.'[249]

"Then those words were absorbed in her heart, and she yearned for this.[250]

"From here on, El'azar, the blessed Holy One did what He did with that wicked one. These concealed mysteries should not be revealed; but in order that the Companions

may know the concealed ways of the world, I have revealed them to you. For there are many concealed laws in the world of which humans are unaware, and these are hidden, grand, and sublime wonders.[251]

"Of [Balaam] and those like him, we read: *The name of* [195a] *the wicked will rot* (Proverbs 10:7). Happy are the truly righteous, of whom is written *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14)."[252]

Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I... (Numbers 22:6).[253]

Rabbi Abba opened, "*A prayer of a poor person when he is faint and pours out his plea before* YHVH (Psalms 102:1). There are three of whom *a prayer* is written, and this matter has been established. But one was Moses, one was David, and one *a poor person*, who is included with them and joined with them.[254]

"Now, you might say, 'Well, look at what is written: *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet* (Habakkuk 3:1), so there are four!' However, Habakkuk [spoke] not for the sake of prayer. Although prayer is ascribed to him, it is praise and thanksgiving to the blessed Holy One for reviving him and performing miracles and mighty deeds for him, since he was the son of the Shunammite woman.[255]

"But there are three that are called *a prayer. A prayer of Moses, man of* Elohim (Psalms 90:1)—a prayer unmatched by any other human. *A prayer of David* (ibid. 86:1)—a prayer unmatched by any other king. *A prayer of a poor person*—that is a prayer![256]

"Of those three, which is the most esteemed of all? You must say *a prayer of a poor person*. This prayer takes precedence over *a prayer of Moses* and over *a prayer of David* and over all other prayers of the world. Why? Because a poor person is brokenhearted, and it is written:

YHVH is near to the brokenhearted… (Psalms 34:19). A poor person constantly quarrels with the blessed Holy One, and the blessed Holy One listens and hears his words. As soon as he utters his prayer, He opens all the windows of the heavens, and all other prayers ascending on high are pushed aside by that poor brokenhearted person—for it is written: *A prayer of a poor person when* יעטוף (*ya'atof*). *When ya'atof*? The verse should read *when* יתעטף (*yit'attef*), *he feels faint*; what is meant by *ya'atof*? Well, he causes עטיפא (*atifa*), a delay, for all prayers of the world, and they do not enter until his prayer enters.[257]

"The blessed Holy One says, 'Let all prayers be delayed, and let this prayer enter My presence. I require here no court to judge between us; let his complaints come before Me, and I and he will be alone.'

"The blessed Holy One secludes Himself with those complaints, with that prayer, as is written: *and pours out his plea before YHVH—before YHVH*, indeed![258]

"All the powers of heaven ask one another, 'What is the blessed Holy One occupied with? What is He engaged in?'

They say, 'He is secluded desirously with His vessels.'[259]

"None of them knows what becomes of that prayer of the poor person and of all his complaints. For a poor person's only desire is to pour out his tears in complaint before the Holy King, and the blessed Holy One's only desire is to receive them as they are poured before Him. This is the prayer that delays all prayers of the world.

"Moses offered his prayer, and he was detained for many days in that prayer. David saw that all the gates and windows of heaven are ready to be opened for a poor person, and that there is no prayer in the world that the blessed Holy One listens to as immediately as to the prayer of a poor person. As soon as he saw this, he made himself poor and needy, stripping off his royal garment and sitting on the ground like a poor man. He uttered a prayer, as is written: *A prayer of David. Incline Your ear, YHVH, answer*

me. If you ask why—*For I am poor and needy* (Psalms 86:1).[260]

"The blessed Holy One said to him, 'David, are you now a king, ruler over mighty kings, and yet you make yourself poor and needy?'

"Immediately, he altered the manner of his prayer, abandoning the word *needy*, saying '*Preserve my soul, for I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *faithful* (Psalms 86:2).' Nevertheless, all was included within David."[261]

Rabbi El'azar said to him, "You have spoken well! Nevertheless, a person who offers his prayer must be poor and needy, making himself poor, so that his prayer may enter into the assemblage of all those poor ones. For none of the gatekeepers allow anyone to enter as easily as the poor, who enter even without permission. If a person makes himself poor, setting his intention constantly on this, his prayer ascends and meets those prayers of the poor—joining them, ascending with them, entering as one of them, and received favorably by the Holy King.[262]

"King David placed himself in four ways. He placed himself with the poor; he placed himself with the faithful; he placed himself with the servants; he placed himself with those who surrender themselves and their souls for the sanctification of the Name.

"He placed himself with the poor, as is written: *For I am poor and needy*. He placed himself with the faithful, as is written: *Preserve my soul, for I am ḥasid, faithful*—since a person must not consider himself wicked.[263]

"Now, you might say, 'If so, he should never specify his sins.' Not so! Rather, when he specifies his sins, then he is *ḥasid, faithful*, for he comes to welcome *teshuvah*. He extricates himself from the evil side, in whose filth he was immersed until now; and now he clings to the supernal Right Hand, which is extended to receive him.[264]

"Do not say that the blessed Holy One does not accept him until he specifies his sins from the day he came into the

world, or those [195b] that are concealed from him, which he cannot grasp. Rather, he is required to specify only those that he remembers; and if he sets his intention on these, all the others are drawn after them. For we have surely learned: 'When eliminating leaven, one does not inspect either the uppermost holes of the house or the lowermost.' Rather, once he has inspected as far as the eye can see, all is drawn after this and nullified with it.[265]

"And so we read in *Nega'im*: 'There are twenty-four tips of limbs that do not become impure due to a live patch [of raw flesh].' And the priest does not trouble himself over them, corresponding to what is written: *wherever the priest's eyes can see* (Leviticus 13:12)—a place where the priest can see the affliction in a single glance, without having to bend down or raise his eyes here or there.[266]

"Similarly, one does not have to specify his sins, searching from the day he was born—for those are 'the lowermost holes of the house'—or those that are concealed, which he cannot grasp, which are 'the uppermost holes of the house.' Come and see: *Wherever the priest's eyes can see*—and all of them are drawn after these. So David placed himself among the faithful.

"He placed himself with the servants, as is written: *Look, like the eyes of servants to the hand of their masters* (Psalms 123:2), and similarly, *Deliver Your servant, O You, my God* (ibid. 86:2).[267]

"He placed himself with those who surrender their souls for the sanctification of His Name, as is written: *Gladden the soul of Your servant, for to You, YHVH, I lift up my soul* (Psalms 86:4). Into all these four, King David made himself before his Lord."[268]

Rabbi El'azar said, "I raise my hands in prayer before the Holy King, for we have learned that a person is forbidden to raise his hands above except in prayer or blessings to his Lord and supplication—as is written: *I raise my hand to YHVH, the Most High God* (Genesis 14:22), and

we translate: 'I raise my hand in prayer,' for the fingers of the hands involve sublime entities. And so I do now, and I say that if anyone arranges these four in the presence of his Lord, forming himself fittingly in aspiration in this array, his prayer will not return empty.[269]

"At first, a servant, arranging praise before his Master, singing before Him—namely with praises preceding the Prayer. And afterward, a servant—after praying the prayer of *Amidah*, he is a servant, having arranged the prayer of his Master and moving on. And afterward, a servant—after offering his entire prayer. So, [David] made himself a servant three times in this prayer, as is written: *Deliver Your servant, O You, my God; Gladden the soul of Your servant;* and it is written *Give Your strength to Your servant* (Psalms 86:16)—look, three times one should set himself as a servant.[270]

"Afterward, to place himself among those who surrender their souls for the sanctification of His Name—that is, through the unification of *Shema Yisra'el*. For whoever sets his intention so in this verse is considered as if he surrendered his soul for the sanctification of His Name.[271]

"Afterward, to set himself as a poor person, when he enters and knocks at the doors of the utmost heights, saying 'True and firm' and joining Redemption to Prayer—so that in the prayer of *Amidah* he will be brokenhearted, poor, and needy, setting his intention on being included among the poor with a broken heart and lowly spirit.[272]

"Afterward, to place himself among the faithful in 'who hears prayer,' specifying his sins; for so an individual should do in 'who hears prayer,' so that he may cleave to the Right Hand, which is extended to receive those who return. Then he is called *ḥasid*, faithful. Here are these four, fittingly.[273]

"Who includes all of these? The one who must include them. And who is that? The servant, who includes all the rest. There are three servants in three places, and all are

one. Of them is written *Look, like the eyes of servants to the hand of their masters*….[274]

"Between servant and servant, those others. Between the first servant and the second servant, one should surrender his soul over the unification of the sanctification of His Name, and set himself as poor and needy in the prayer of *Amidah*, and place himself among the faithful in 'who hears prayer.' The third servant, after concluding and arranging all.[275]

"We have learned: At the moment when a person has arrayed all these arrangements with heartfelt devotion, the blessed Holy One is pleased, and He extends His right hand over him, at that third servant, and proclaims over him: *You are My servant*, as is written: *You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3). Surely, the prayer [196a] of this person will never return empty."[276]

Rabbi Abba came and kissed him.

Rabbi El'azar said, "Come and see: Two of those three servants include all of these, for the third is poised to be stamped with the supernal seal, to be touched by the right hand of the King, who glories in him. But these two, the first and the second, are totality of all. David later glorified himself in them, as is written: *O YHVH, verily I am Your servant; I am Your servant* (Psalms 116:16), since these include all the rest. 'The third depends on You, to redeem me,' as is written: *Deliver Your servant, O You, my God*. Whoever arranges this, let him know that the blessed Holy One glories in him and proclaims over him: *You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory*."[277]

Rabbi Abba said, "Of this we read *More desirable than gold, than abundant pure gold; sweeter than honey and drippings of the comb* (Psalms 19:11). How sweet are primeval words, arranged by the ancients! Yet when we taste them, we cannot eat. It is certainly so! Scripture attests to three servants, and they are one and in one place. Two, as you have said; and one for the blessed Holy One,

with which to be crowned, as is written: *For Mine are the Children of Israel as servants; they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt* (Leviticus 25:55). *They shall not be sold as slaves are sold* (ibid., 42)—for the blessed Holy One must be crowned by this third one, so *they shall not be sold* as slaves, since they belong to the blessed Holy One."[278]

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*Who among you reveres YHVH, hearing the voice of His servant?* (Isaiah 50:10). What is meant by *hearing the voice of His servant? Though he walks in darkness and has no gleam, let him trust in the name of YHVH and rely upon his God*? This verse has been established by the Companions, and so it is: If someone comes regularly to synagogue to pray and one day does not come, the blessed Holy One inquires about him, saying, *Who among you reveres YHVH…?* What is meant by *hearing the voice of His servant*? The voice of whom? If you say of a prophet or of another person—how is a prophet or another person associated with prayer, so that because one offers his prayer he *hears the voice of* a prophet or of some person in the world?[279]

"Rather, one who offers his prayer every day *hears* that *voice* with which the blessed Holy One calls to him, glorying in him, saying that he is *His servant*, surely! *Hearing the voice*—which *voice*? The one by which he is called *His servant*. It is a great honor that a *voice* issues, proclaiming that he is *His servant*. Furthermore, the voice is heard in all those heavens, proclaiming that he is the *servant* of the Holy King. This is *hearing the voice of His servant*.[280]

"אשר הלך חשכים (*Asher halakh ḥashekhim*), *Though he walks in darkness*. Just because he doesn't come to pray, *he walks in darkness?* Well, this has been established. However, before Israel gathers in synagogues to pray, the Other Side stands and closes up all the supernal lights, so that they will not spread and radiate over [all] the worlds. Three times a day,

the Other Side—male and female—goes roaming through the world; and that time is ordained for prayer, for no accusation occurs there at all.

"Then is the time for prayer, because they proceed to be sent into the Mountains of Darkness and Benighted Mountain. Then the windows of supernal lights are opened, and they radiate, spreading over the synagogues, onto the heads of those offering prayer, lights scattering upon their heads. The blessed Holy One inquires about the one who is not there, saying, 'Alas for so-and-so who is regularly here! Now that *halakh ḥashekhim, darknesses have gone*, and been removed from the lights and *gone* to wander in the mountains of the world, and from that *gleam* has issued radiant light—he has no share in it, *he has no gleam*, as it is diffused, spreading upon the others there. How many benefits he has lost! *He has no gleam*, now that *darknesses have gone*. If he were there, *he would trust in the name of YHVH*—in the realm of the first servant. *And rely upon his God*—in the mystery of the second servant.'"[281]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Eleazar, surely the spirit of prophecy has settled upon you!"[282]

Rabbi Abba said, "Lion, son of a lion—who can stand before them when they roar to tear their prey? All lions of the world are mighty, yet these more than all. From the mouths of all lions of the world, it is hard to pull out prey, yet from the mouths of these it is easy—they tear prey and give to all.[283]

"אשר הלך חשכים (*Asher halakh ḥashekhim*), *Darknesses has gone*—the verse should read אשר הלכו (*asher halekhu*), *have gone*."[284]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Because they begin in union and immediately separate. *Halakh, has gone*—union. *Ḥashekhim, darknesses*—they separate. Beginning in union, they separate immediately.[285]

"Similarly, רוח סערה באה (*Ruaḥ se'arah ba'ah*), *A wind, a storm, she comes* (Ezekiel 1:4)—totality of male and female.

Ba'ah, She comes—[196b] she leaves him, and immediately they separate."[286]

Balak [*son of Zippor*] *saw*… (Numbers 22:2).[287]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Surely, what Rabbi Ḥiyya said was a concealed matter. However, it is written: *Even* צפור (*tsippor*), *the bird, has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she sets her fledglings by Your altars, YHVH of Hosts, my king and my God* (Psalms 84:4). Now, would King David have said this about a mere bird?[288]

"Rather, as we have learned: How beloved are souls before the blessed Holy One! Now, if you say, 'All souls of the world'—no, only those souls of the righteous, whose abode is there with Him, their abode above and their abode below. And so it has been said: *Even the bird has found a home*—the spirits of the righteous.[289]

"We have learned: The Garden of Eden has three walls, and in between each one many souls and spirits stroll, enjoying the fragrance of the delights of the righteous within, although they are not worthy of entering. But the delight of the righteous within—*no eye has seen, O God*, [*but You*]… (Isaiah 64:3).[290]

"There are designated days in the year, namely the days of Nisan and the days of Tishrei, when those spirits roam and visit the place they must. Although they roam on many occasions, these days are designated, and they appear on the walls of the Garden—each one in the image of a chirping bird every single morning.[291]

"That chirping is praise of the blessed Holy One and prayer for the life of human beings in this world, because on these days all of Israel are engaged in *mitsvot* and precepts of the Master of the Universe. Then chirping birds appear in joy—chirping, praising, and acclaiming, and praying for those living in this world."[292]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Well spoken, for surely those are the spirits there! But what would you say of ודרור (*u-dror*), *and the swallow, a nest for herself*?”

He replied, “I have learned as follows: This is the holy soul that ascends on high, rising to a hidden, concealed place that *no eye has seen*….”[293]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “El’azar, you have surely spoken well, and that is fine. But all this pertains to the Lower Garden of Eden, and as you have said, so it is, surely so. *Even the bird has found a home*—holy spirits who are worthy of entering and afterward emerging, for they roam and appear so, and these spirits *found a home*, surely! Every single one has a specific habitation within.[294]

“Until now, each of them is scorched by the canopy of his fellow. Once they have דרור (*deror*), release, and freedom from all, the blessed Holy One shows them a certain concealed, hidden palace, which *no eye has seen, O God*, [*but You*], and that palace is called Bird’s Nest. There crowns are fashioned for the Messiah in the time to come. On designated days, three times a year, the blessed Holy One wishes to delight in those righteous ones, and He shows them that concealed, hidden palace, which none of the righteous there knows or recognizes.[295]

“*Where she sets her fledglings*—those righteous ones who have been consummated with holy sons who have attained the Written Torah and Oral Torah in this world, called two altars. They are adorned before the Holy King, since the merit of their sons in this world adorns them there. Which spirit attains this? The one that *sets her fledglings*—teaching [them] *Your altars*….[296]

“From here on, utter your words, for without shame I will appear there!”[297]

Rabbi El’azar opened as before, saying, “*Even the bird has found a home*—Jethro. *And the swallow a nest for herself*—

his sons, who were in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, teaching Torah and decreeing words of Torah with their mouths.[298]

"What is meant by *has found a home?* Well, at first they journeyed and encamped in the desert, leaving the pleasures of Jericho and its sweetness, and camping in the desert. Once the blessed Holy One saw that their yearning was for Torah, He drew them from there and conducted them into the Chamber of Hewn Stone.[299]

"*And the swallow* קן (*qen*), *a nest, for herself*—all is one. צפור דרור (*Tsippor deror*), *The bird, the swallow*—all is one. *Heber* הקני (*ha-Qeni*), *the Kenite* (Judges 4:17), *Saul said to* הקני (*ha-Qeni*), *the Kenites* (1 Samuel 15:6).[300]

"Come and see what is written: *Balak son of Zippor saw*. Now, why is his father's name uniquely mentioned, unlike other kings? Well, Jethro was drawn away and removed from idolatry, and he came to cleave to Israel—he and his sons. And the whole world banished him [197a] and pursued him.[301]

"Balak was one of his descendants, and he deviated from his father's path. When the elders of Midian and the elders of Moab—who were together as comrades—saw that Jethro and his descendants clung to *Shekhinah*, whereas this one withdrew from them, they came and made him king over them at that time, as is written: *Balak son of Zippor was king over Moab at that time* (Numbers 22:4)—*at that time* he was king, something that he wasn't before. Because of this it is written: *son of Zippor*—for whom it was unbefitting to act so.[302]

"*Balak saw*—the verse should read *Balak heard*; what is meant by *saw*? He saw a vision, and he knew that he was destined to fall into the hand of Israel—Israel first falling into his hands, and then he into the hand of Israel."[303]

Rabbi Abba opened, "*If you do not know, O fairest of women, go follow the tracks of the sheep, and graze your kids by the shepherds' tents* (Song of Songs 1:8). Assembly

Balak son of Zippor saw (Numbers 22:2). of Israel was speaking to the supernal King. כנישתא דישראל (*Kenishta de-Yisra'el*), Assembly of Israel—what is meant by *kenishta*? This is עצרת (*atseret*), convocation—כנישו (*kenishu*), gathering, as is said: מאסף (*me'asseph*), *gatherer, of all the camps* (Numbers 10:25), the one who gathers all celestial camps to Herself. And because sometimes the Female is called *Kenishta*, Gathering.[304]

"And you might say, '*Atseret*—as is said: *For YHVH* עצור עצר (*atsor atsar*), *had shut fast* (Genesis 20:18), for She takes and does not give.' Certainly so! For due to Her great faithfulness—that no blemish is found in Her—She is granted [the flow] unrestrainedly. But when all that She has gathered reaches Her, She 'shuts fast' and restrains, so that it descends only like dew, drop by drop, bit by bit. Why? Because She discovers no faith below, except as is said: *a little here, a little there* (Isaiah 28:13).[305]

"For if She would discover faith as it is found in Her, She would pour forth in every single direction unrestrainedly; She would delight. Then they would give Her many gifts and presents, one upon another; they would not hold back from Her at all. But those below restrain them and restrain Her, and then She is *Atseret*, Holding Back —עצור עצר יהוה (*atsor atsar YHVH*), *YHVH had shut fast*, surely! As it were, She gives drippings, nothing more. Nevertheless, as a mother gives to her children in secret, unbeknown, so She does to Her children, Israel.[306]

"And I learned from the Holy Lamp that when She ascends to gather desirable delicacies, and a blemish is found in Israel below, then a drop the size of a mustard seed reaches Her, and immediately She is removed and waits on account of it for the specified number of days.[307]

"Then they know above that there is a blemish in Israel, and the Left is aroused instantly, extending a thread below.

His eyes were too dim to see (Genesis 27:1). Whereas He was gazing with a fine eye, by the principle of Abraham, with no Judgment at all, then *his eyes were too dim to see—to see* surely, to gaze by the principle of Compassion. Then, arousal of Samael in a powerful voice, rousing himself upon the world, as is said: *He called Esau*, בנו הגדול (*beno ha-gadol*), *his elder son* (ibid.)—he is גדול (*gadol*), *great*, among the camps of the Other Side; he is *great* over them, conducting all ships of the sea convulsed by an evil wind, to sink them in the depth of the ocean, in his *depths of the sea*.[308]

"When the blessed Holy One is in a state of Compassion, all of Israel's sins and transgressions He gives to [Samael], who casts them into *the depths of the sea*. All his camps are called *depths of the sea*, and they grasp them, and swim with them to all the other nations.[309]

"Now, are the sins of Israel and their transgressions really thrown and distributed to their nations? Well, they wait expectantly for gifts from above like a dog in front of the table. When the blessed Holy One takes all of [Israel's] sins and throws them upon them, they all think that the gifts and presents He wanted to give to Israel, He removed from [Israel] and gave to them! Immediately, they all together throw them upon the other nations.[310]

"Come and see: Assembly of Israel says at first, *Black am I but beautiful* (Song of Songs 1:5), diminishing Herself before the Holy King. Then She asks Him, saying, *Tell me, you whom my soul loves*, איכה (*eikhah*), *how, do you pasture your sheep? Eikhah, How, do you rest them at noon?* (ibid., 7). Why twice: *eikhah, eikhah*? Well, She is hinting at two destructions of the two Temples, when everyone exclaims, '*Eikhah, How?*' *Eikhah, How, do you pasture your sheep*—referring to the destruction of the First Temple. *Eikhah, How, do you rest them*—referring to the destruction of the Second Temple. So twice: *Eikhah, eikhah*.[311]

"תרעה (*Tir'eh*), *You pasture*; תרביץ (*tarbits*), *you rest them*—one unlike the other. The verse should read ירעה (*yir'eh*), *he*

pastures; ירביץ (*yarbits*), *he rests them*, since She is speaking about Israel. But in fact, She is speaking about Herself—איכה תרעה כלתך (*Eikhah tir'eh kallatekha*), *How does* your Bride *pasture*, Her children in their exile among the other nations? איכה תרביץ (*Eikhah tarbits*), *How does she sprinkle them, at noon?*—How will She drip dew and water upon them in the heat of *noon*?[312]

"'*Lest I be as one enwrapped* (Song of Songs 1:7) when Israel calls out in distress, and other nations [197b] revile and curse them—"When will you leave exile? Why doesn't your God perform miracles for you?" And [the people of Israel] esteem themselves, saying, "כה תרעה (*Koh tir'eh*), *Thus she will pasture*, us, as in ancient days. כה תרביץ (*Koh tarbits*), *Thus she will sprinkle*, with holy water—to cool the heat of your fiery flames!" They take pride in all this. And I sit *as one enwrapped*, unable to perform miracles for them and avenge them.'[313]

"He replies to Her, '*If you do not know for yourself, O fairest of women* (Song of Songs 1:8). This verse should read as follows: *If you do not know, O fairest of women*; why *for yourself?* Well, *If you do not know* how to strengthen Yourself and fortify Your power to protect Your children, then *go for yourself*, to strengthen Yourself *in the tracks of the sheep*—namely schoolchildren studying Torah.[314]

"*And graze your kids* (ibid.)—those taken from the breast, who vanish from the world and are conveyed to the Supreme Academy, which is על (*al*), *by, the shepherds' tents*—*al, above*, precisely! It is not written למשכנות הרועים (*le-mishkenot ha-ro'im, by the shepherds' tents*, but rather *al, above, the shepherds' tents*. This is the Academy of Metatron, occupied by all the mighty of the world and guides of Torah in this world in matters of forbidden and permitted, in everything needed by inhabitants of the world. For *the tracks of the sheep* are schoolchildren, as we have said."[315]

Rabbi El’azar said, “*The tracks of the sheep* are the students of the academy who come later into the world and find Torah on a straight path, and the path is open. So they renew ancient words every day, and *Shekhinah* settles upon them, listening to their words, as is said: *YHVH listened and heard* (Malachi 3:16).”[316]

Rabbi Abba said, “Certainly so! And all is one matter.[317]

“Alternatively, *If you do not know for yourself*—why *for yourself?* Well, wherever Israel is in exile, She is with them. So it is written *for yourself*, and similarly: *In all their distress* לו צר (*lo tsar*), *He was distressed* (Isaiah 63:9). This is the meaning of *for yourself*.[318]

"*O fairest of women. O fairest*—She says that She is black, as is said: *Black am I* (Song of Songs 1:5), and He says to Her, '*O fairest of women*'—beautiful. *O fairest of women—You are fair, my love* (ibid. 6:4).[319]

"Alternatively, *O fairest of women*—fine in kindness, for She bestows kindness upon Her children secretly, covertly, and the blessed Holy One is very pleased by all that She does for Her children, even though they don't deserve it. From here we learn that a father should love and appreciate everything that a mother does for her children secretly, covertly, even though their conduct is improper."[320]

Rabbi Abba said, "I am surprised by what is written: *If a man has a wayward and rebellious son…, his father and his mother shall seize him…* (Deuteronomy 21:18–19). We have learned that at that moment the blessed Holy One said to Moses, 'Write!'[321]

"Moses replied, 'Master of the Universe, is there a father who would do this to his son?' Moses saw from afar in wisdom all that the blessed Holy One would do to Israel, so he said, 'Master of the Universe, leave this matter out!'[322]

"The blessed Holy One replied, 'Moses, I see what you are saying. Write and receive a reward! You know, yet I know more. Whatever you see, that act is up to Me. Interpret Scripture and discover!'[323]

"At that moment, He gestured to Yofiel, the master of Torah. [Yofiel] said, 'Moses, I have expounded this passage. It is written: *If a man has*—the blessed Holy One, as is written: *YHVH is a man of war* (Exodus 15:3).[324]

"*A son*—Israel, as is written: *My son, My firstborn, Israel* (ibid. 4:22).

"'*Wayward and rebellious*—as is written: *For like a wayward cow, Israel has been wayward* (Hosea 4:16).[325]

"'*Who does not heed his father's voice and his mother's voice* (Deuteronomy 21:18)—the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel.[326]

"'*And they punish him* (ibid.)—as is written: *YHVH sent a message by every prophet, every seer*... (2 Kings 17:13).[327]

"'*And he does not heed them* (Deuteronomy, ibid.)—as is written: *and they did not heed YHVH*....[328]

"'*His father and his mother shall seize him*... (ibid., 19)—with a single mind, in complete consent.[329]

"'*And bring him out to the elders of his town and to the gate of his place* (ibid.). *To the elders of his town*—the verse should read *to the elders of their town*; why *to the elders of his town and to the gate of his place?* Well, *to the elders of his town*—referring to the blessed Holy One. *And to the gate of his place*—referring to Assembly of Israel.[330]

"'*The elders of his town*—Primordial Days, Ancient Days, oldest of all. *The gate of his place—musaf* of Sabbath.[331]

"'Nevertheless, even though all know the judgment, it is consigned above; because the Court of Mother is related to Israel and linked with them, and no relative can try the case of his relation, and he is disqualified to render judgment.[332]

"'What is written first? *To the elders of his town and to the gate of his place*. As soon as the blessed Holy One saw that they were related, He immediately removed the trial from *the gate of his place*. What is written? *They shall say to the elders of his town* (Deuteronomy 21:20) [198a]—alone. It is not written *and to the gate of his place*, but rather *to the elders of his town*.[333]

"'*This son of ours* (ibid.)—surely, and not other nations.[334]

"'*Is wayward and rebellious; he does not heed our voice*—why the change? Look, at first it is not written *is a glutton and a drunk*, whereas afterward it is! Well, what causes Israel to be *wayward and rebellious* toward their Father in heaven? The fact that they are *a glutton and a drunk* like

other nations, as is written: *They mingled with the nations and learned their deeds* (Psalms 106:35); and similarly: *The people ate and bowed down* (Numbers 25:2). For the root and foundation is eating and drinking, when they act like other nations—this causes them to be *a wayward and rebellious son* toward their Father in heaven.[335]

"'*All the people of his town shall stone him* (Deuteronomy 21:21)—all the other nations, who were hurling stones at them and tearing down walls and smashing towers, yet it did them no good at all.'[336]

"When Moses heard this, he wrote this passage.[337]

"Nevertheless, *O fairest of women*—finest and most precious among women of the world. *Go follow the tracks of the sheep*—as they have already established, these are the synagogues and houses of study.[338]

"*And graze your kids*—schoolchildren, who have never tasted sin.[339]

"*By the shepherds' tents*—teachers of children and heads of academies.

"Alternatively, *By* משכנות הרעים (*mishkenot ha-ro'im*), *the shepherds' tents*, lacking a ו (*vav*)—those wicked ones, namely the Amorite kings whose land the Israelites seized for pasture for their livestock, turning it into pasture land. When Balak heard that Israel had waged war over such valuable land and destroyed it, turning it into pasture, he strove with all his might and collaborated with Balaam."[340]

Balak saw. Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened, "*Thus says YHVH: Keep what is right and do what is just; for soon My salvation shall come, and My deliverance be revealed* (Isaiah 56:1). How beloved are Israel before the blessed Holy One, for even though they have sinned before Him and constantly sin before Him, He treats their intentional sins as errors.[341]

"For so Rav Hamnuna Sava said: Our Rabbis arranged three gates of laws in the order of the Mishnah. One, the first, with 'four primary causes of damage: an ox…' The

second, a garment that was found. The third, partners and the mystery of a lost object. Why? Well, the blessed Holy One always treats Israel's intentional sins as errors.[342]

"Those who arranged our Mishnah in three gates arranged it according to the manner of Scripture, as is written: *in every matter of transgression* (Exodus 22:8)—and this *transgression* is not intentional. What is it? *For an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep* (ibid.)—*Bava Qamma* (the First Gate), for it involves those matters. *For a cloak* (ibid.)—*Bava Metsi'a* (the Middle Gate). *For every loss*—*Bava Telita'ah* (the Third Gate).[343]

"They followed the pattern of Scripture. For when [Rav Hamnuna Sava] reached *Bava Metsi'a* (the Middle Gate), he said, 'Why did they begin with this garment?' Once he found the verse, he said, 'Surely, this is a law given to Moses at Sinai! All the words of our Rabbis are fitting.'[344]

"*Thus says YHVH*. Why is it that with all the prophets it is written *Thus says YHVH*, whereas with Moses it is not? Well, concerning Moses—whose prophecy derived from the speculum that shines, above—it is not written כה (*koh*), *thus*. But other prophets, who prophesied from the speculum that does not shine, prophesied from *Koh* (*Thus*)."[345]

Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it… (Numbers 22:6).[346]

Now. Rabbi El'azar said, "'Surely, the time is ripe for me to do what I want!' He saw, but he did not see accurately. He saw many thousands among Israel falling by his hands shortly, so he said, 'Surely, the time is ripe—*Now*, not at another time.'[347]

"לכה (*Lekhah*), *go*—the verse should read לך (*lekh*), *go*; why *lekhah*? Well, he said, 'Let us quicken ourselves against the one who hovers over them with Her wings, who is named כה (*Koh*), Thus. *Now*, לכה (*le-Khoh*)—let us wage war against that

Koh.’ *Now, go*—as is said: *Now to the spoil, Moab!* (2 Kings 3:23).[348]

“He said, ‘Until now, there was no one in the world who could prevail against them, because of that Protector they have. Now that the time is ripe, *le-Khoh, against Koh*, let us wage war.’ So the whole counsel of that wicked one was *le-Khoh, against Koh*, as is written: ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (Numbers 23:15)—אעקר לההוא כה (*e’qar le-hahu koh*), ‘I will uproot that *Koh*, from its place.’ Both of them shared evil counsel, as is said: *against YHVH and against His anointed* (Psalms 2:2). But they did not know that later this *Koh* would uproot them from the world.[349]

“*For it is mightier than I*. Now, until that time, where had [Israel] done battle with him and defeated him? Where had [Moab] encountered their sword, so that [Israel] could have fought [198b] like mighty warriors, displaying their power? What is meant by *for* עצום הוא ממני (*atsum hu mimenni*), *it is mightier than I*? Well, that wicked one was wise and saw from afar—he saw King David, who stemmed from Ruth the Moabitess: a warrior mighty as a lion, triumphing in fierce battles against Moab, setting them under his feet. He said, ‘*Atsum hu, He is mighty*, and one king of theirs will inherit that might מינן (*mi-nan*), from us, and will come forth to destroy Moab.’[350]

“*Perhaps* אוכל נכה בו (*ukhal nakkeh bo*), *I will be able, that we can strike against it*. This verse should read as follows: *Perhaps* אוכל אכה בו (*ukhal akkeh bo*), *I will be able to strike against it*, or *Perhaps* נוכל נכה בו (*nukhal nakkeh bo*), *we will be able to strike against it*. However, that wicked one was wise. He said, ‘I see one paw of a certain mighty lion, extending its paw. If I am able with you—both of us joining together—to cut off this paw from that lion, then that king won’t come into the world and will not drive Moab out of its territory.’”[351]

ארה (*Arah*), *Curse*, [*this people*] *for me*. What is meant by *Arah, Curse, for me?*

Rabbi Abba said, “That wicked one spoke to Balaam using two expressions, saying ארה (*Arah*), *Curse, for me*, and also קבה (*Qavah*), *Execrate, for me* (Numbers 22:17). What is the difference between them? Well, [Balak] said to [Balaam], ‘*Arah, Gather, for me* herbs and sorcerous snakes’ heads, and put them in a cauldron of witchcraft.’ When he saw that [Balaam] had greater power with his mouth, he went on to say, *Please, go qavah, execrate*, [*this people*] *for me*.[352]

“Still, that wicked Balak did not neglect his sorcery, but rather gathered all kinds of herbs and sorcerous snakes’ heads and took a cauldron of witchcraft and stuck it fifteen hundred cubits underground, hiding it away till the end of many days.

“When David came, he dug fifteen hundred cubits into the depths and brought up water from the depths and poured a libation upon the altar. At that moment, he said, ‘I will wash out that cauldron; *Moab is my washbasin* (Psalms 108:10)’—*my washbasin*, surely![353]

“*Upon Edom I fling my shoe* (ibid.). What is meant by *I fling my shoe?* Well, this too was from afar, as is written: *Esau said to Jacob, ‘Let me gulp down some of this red red stuff, for I am famished’* (Genesis 25:30). *Let me gulp down* —real gulping, opening the mouth and throat to swallow. David said to that swallower, who gulps down mouthfuls, ‘I will fling my shoe at him, clogging his throat.’[354]

“*Over Philistia* אתרועע (*etro’a*), *I shout exultant* (Psalms 108:10)—this too, David saw from afar. ‘It is the evil side of the Other Side, and the Philistines stem from there. What is required against the Other Side? תרועה (*Teru’ah*), A blast, to smash his power and might. Thus, *Over Philistia* אתרועע (*etro’a*), *I will blast*, just like they deserve.’”[355]

Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I (Numbers 22:6).

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened, “*Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins* (Isaiah 11:5). This verse is all one and the same! What new insight does it come to tell us, since *righteousness* is equivalent to *faithfulness*, and *faithfulness* is equivalent to *righteousness*? *The belt of his waist* is the same as *the belt of his loins*; *the belt of his loins* is the same as *the belt of his waist*. We don’t find a verse like this![356]

“Ah, but *righteousness* is not like *faithfulness*—although all is one, and a single rung. When She abides in harsh Judgment and receives from the left side, then She is called *righteousness*—actual Judgment! This corresponds to: *For when* משפטיך (*mishpatekha*), *Your judgments, reach the earth, all inhabitants of the world learn righteousness* (Isaiah 26:9), for the rung of *Mishpat*, Justice, is Compassion, and when *Mishpat* draws near *righteousness*, then all is assuaged, and inhabitants of the world can bear the Judgment of *righteousness*. So, *righteousness* is like *faithfulness*![357]

“*Faithfulness*, when Truth unites with Her—joy and all faces beaming—then She is called *faithfulness*, and there is leniency for all. All souls ascend, encumbered by many debts of evil wickedness; but since they ascend entrusted, She anticipates them with compassion and has mercy upon them. Then She is called *faithfulness*, and there is no *faithfulness* without Truth.[358]

“Now one should examine: *the belt of his waist* and *the belt of his loins*. What are two belts doing here? Well, even though *waist* and *loins* are one, they are two rungs, one above and one below—above, at the beginning, is called *waist*; below, at the end, is called *loins*, as is said: *Gird sackcloth upon your loins* (Isaiah 32:11), at the end, at the top of the thighs. When a woman is in pangs of labor, the loins are torn away from the top of the thighs, and she places her hands on them out of pain.[359]

“Consequently, for might and for battle, *righteousness the belt of his waist*, and so it must be. For compassion and goodness, *faithfulness the belt of his loins*. With one rung, he will judge the world—in two aspects: one rung [199a] for Israel and one rung for the other nations.[360]

“Now, you might say, ‘*Righteousness* is harsh judgment, and yet it is written: *In righteousness you shall judge your fellow* (Leviticus 19:15); *Righteousness, righteousness shall you pursue* (Deuteronomy 16:20); and there are various others.’ Certainly so! For *righteousness* includes no leniency at all. One who judges his friend must not be lenient toward him at all; rather *in righteousness*, not taking love into consideration. *Scales of righteousness* (Leviticus 19:36)—without laxity to one side or the other, to the one who is giving or to the one receiving.[361]

“Consequently, one rung is divided into two aspects—lights enduring—one for the other nations and one for Israel. When Israel went forth from Egypt, they girded themselves with these lights: one of war and one of peace, and all was in *righteousness*.[362]

“When they took counsel with one another, Balak said, ‘*I will drive it out of the land*’ (Numbers 22:6). He said, ‘That rung with which they are girded is *of the land*, surely!’ This is the meaning of *for it is mightier than I*, surely! ‘Who can withstand Israel? Their rung is mightier than mine. Therefore, *I will drive it out of the land*—if *I drive it out of* this *land* and cast it out, I will be able to do all that I wish. In what does their power lie? In the mouth and in action. Here is your mouth and my action!’[363]

“*For I know that whomever you bless is blessed* [*and whomever you curse is cursed*] (Numbers 22:6). Now, how did he know? This has already been established, for previously it is written: [Sihon king of the Amorites] *had fought against the former king of Moab and seized all his land from his hand* (ibid. 21:26), since he hired Balaam, and

so on. However, *For I know*—with genuine knowledge he knew, through his wisdom.[364]

"את אשר תברך (*Et asher tevarekh*), *Whomever you bless, is blessed*. Why is blessing required here, seeing that he went for the purpose of cursing? And if what he knew previously of Balaam's action was cursing, why *whomever you bless is blessed*?[365]

"Well, there is something here, and I did not know it or attain it until Rabbi El'azar came and expounded: *Let me bless* את יהוה (*et YHVH*), *YHVH, at all times, always His praise in my mouth* (Psalms 34:2); and it is written: *I will bless* את יהוה (*et YHVH*), *YHVH, who gave me counsel* (ibid. 16:7). Who needs blessing from those below? את (*Et*), for it clings to them as a flame to the wick. And David, who knew this, said, *Let me bless Et*.[366]

"That wicked one said, 'That rung of theirs clings to them because of the blessings that they offer to it every day. You have the power to bless that rung, and you can detach it from them, *for I know that et asher tevarekh, whomever you bless, is blessed*. That's how we'll prevail against them: bless that rung and curse the wick!' So he said, ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (Numbers 23:15)—אעקר ליה (*e'qar leih*), 'I will detach it, from them, so that it cannot cling to them.'[367]

"Immediately, *the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went with implements of divination* (Numbers 22:7)—'that wicked one won't say he doesn't have the implements of sorcery he needs, and delay on account of them.'"[368]

He opened, saying, "אתה (*Attah*), *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob; do not be dismayed, O Israel, for I am with you! For I will make an end* [*of all the nations where I have scattered you*]… (Jeremiah 46:27–28). This verse has been discussed and we have aroused its meaning, but now it should be aroused further. What is meant by אתה (*attah*),

you? Mystery of Ark of the Covenant, for this is the rung that goes into exile with Her children, the Holy People.[369]

"When Moses demanded mercy for Israel, what is written? *If this is how* את (*at*), *You, treat me* (Numbers 11:15), and this has been established. But Moses said as follows: 'One rung that You granted me is called אתה (*Attah*), You, because it is not separated from You. Her ה (*he*) is joined with Israel. If You annihilate them from the world, then the ה (*he*) of this name, which is linked with them, will be removed from it. If so, את (*at*), *You*—for ה (*he*), the essence of this name, will be uprooted.[370]

"Concerning this, Joshua later said, *What will You do for Your great name?* (Joshua 7:9), for surely this name is the root and foundation of all—אתה (*Attah*), *You, are* YHVH (Jeremiah 14:22).[371]

"And Moses, even though the blessed Holy One did not tell him so, knew that one depends on the other and that sin proves decisive.[372]

"אתה (*Attah*), *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob*; *do not be dismayed, O Israel*—all is one.[373]

"*For I am with you*—as we have already established: it is not written *for you are with Me*, but rather *for I am with you*.[374]

"*For I will make an end of all the nations*—of all the nations I will make an end.[375]

"Rav Hamnuna the First said, 'The distress and affliction of Israel bring them many benefits and advantages. The ease of other nations brings them many evils. דחיקו (*Deḥiqu*), distress, and affliction of Israel brings them benefit and advantage. What is that? [199b] כַּלָּה (*Kallah*), Bride—all דחיק (*deḥiq*), pointed. רפיון (*Rifyon*), ease, of the other nations brings them *rifyon*, weakness, and evil. What is that? כָּלָה (*Khalah*), *complete destruction*. This is just what they deserve, for all the *rifyon*, ease—without *deḥiqu*, distress—that they had in this world causes them *rifyon*, weakness, afterward, without *deḥiqu*, pointing: כָּלָה (*khalah*),

complete destruction; *For* כָּלָה ונחרצה (*khalah ve-neḥeratsah*), *a decreed destruction, I have heard* (Isaiah 28:22); *For I will make* כָּלָה (*khalah*), *a complete destruction*, all in *rifyon*, weakness. But for Israel, who had *deḥiqu*, distress, and affliction—כַּלָּה (*Kallah*), *A bride, will adorn herself with her ornaments* (ibid. 61:10). Who are *her ornaments*? Israel, who are the ornaments of this Bride.[376]

"'For Israel, who endured distress and affliction, *I will raise the fallen booth of David* (Amos 9:11)—the booth of peace. For the other nations, who had *rifyon*, ease—torment, *trouble and torment* (Isaiah 30:6); כָּלָה (*khalah*), *complete destruction*, in *rifyon*, weakness, as they had before. So, *For I will make* כָּלָה (*khalah*), *an end, of all the nations… but of you I will not make khalah, an end*—since you were already *deḥiq*, distressed, and כַּלָּה (*Kallah*), the Bride, will be *deḥiq*, pointed.'[377]

"*I will chasten you* למשפט (*la-mishpat*), *for justice* (Jeremiah 46:28). This verse should read *I will chasten you* במשפט (*ba-mishpat*), *in justice*—for when are chastenings? At the time of judgment. Yet here, not so; rather *I will chasten you la-mishpat, for justice*.[378]

"However, it is written: *YHVH will enter* במשפט (*be-mishpat*), *into judgment, against the elders of His people* (Isaiah 3:14). On that day, the blessed Holy One will provide a remedy for Israel in advance, before they appear for judgment, so that they will be able to endure. What is that? All the time, constantly, He chastens them little by little, so that when they appear for judgment, it will not prevail over them.[379]

"*And I will surely not leave you unpunished* (Jeremiah 46:28). What is meant by that? Well, when the people of Israel are by themselves—not appearing for judgment with the other nations—the blessed Holy One deals with them beyond the line of strict justice, atoning for them. When they appear for judgment among the other nations, what does He do? The blessed Holy One knows that Samael, the

guardian [of the other nations], will come to call attention to Israel's sins, all of which he has accumulated for himself for the Day of Judgment. So He provides a remedy for them in advance, and for every single sin He strikes them with chastening little by little. When they appear for judgment, Samael comes with many lists against them. The blessed Holy One takes out lists of the chastenings that Israel has endured for every single sin, and all the sins are expunged —without His showing them any leniency at all. Then [Samael's] power and strength fade, and he cannot prevail against them.[380]

"King David said, *For look, the wicked bend the bow, they set their arrow on the string, to shoot from the darkness at the upright* (Psalms 11:2). Although this verse has been established as referring to Shebna and his company and Joah, ministers of Hezekiah, and this has been discussed, still, this verse was uttered concerning Samael and his company, all of whose actions and advice are directed against Israel.[381]

"Balak and Balaam took that very same path, and, as has been said, they formed an evil partnership. They said, 'עמלק (*Amaleq*), Amalek—עם לק (*am laq*): עמא דלקא (*amma di-lqa*), a nation that struck, them like a snake striking with its tail. Look, we are greater: בלק (*Balaq*), Balak—בא לק (*ba laq*): one comes דלקי (*de-laqei*), who strikes, them as he wishes! בלעם (*Bil'am*), Balaam—בל עם (*bal am*): לית עמא (*leit amma*), there is no nation, and no shepherd. Our name will cause their annihilation from the world.'[382]

"But the blessed Holy One reckoned their names in a different manner. In בלק (*Balaq*), Balak, בל (*bal*); in בלעם (*Bil'am*), Balaam, בל (*bil*)—look, בלבל (*bilbel*), confused. Which letters are left? עמק (*Omeq*), depth. בלבל עמקא (*Bilbel umqa*), He confused the depth, of their thought, so that they could gain no dominion in the world."[383]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "You have spoken well! However, may Balak's spirit expire in Hell, and may Balaam's bones

and spirit be crushed there! It is as follows: They took evil counsel against the Protector—against this כה (*Koh*), Thus, whom they planned to uproot—intending to elevate the evil side by mouth and by action.[384]

"That evil one said, 'The ancients tried and did not succeed—the generation of the Dispersion tried and did not succeed. They performed the deed; but their mouth was lacking since their tongues became confused, and they did not succeed. But as for you, look, your mouth is sharp and your tongue equipped with these two aspects: *Whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed* (Numbers 22:6). The side that you wish to elevate is raised by your mouth and tongue. The side stands before you, and all depends upon you [200a]—for the action has already been arranged, but all depends upon the word. The side *you bless is blessed*, and the side *you curse is cursed*.'[385]

"He did not know that the blessed Holy One *removes speech from the trustworthy, and sense of the elders He takes away* (Job 12:20), and all depends on authorization. *He removes speech from the trustworthy*—the generation of the Dispersion, whose tongues He confused so that they had no control at all of their speech, as is written: *so that they will not understand each other's language* (Genesis 11:7). *And sense of the elders He takes away*—Balaam and Balak, both of whom shared a single plan, as is written: *Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar* (Numbers 23:2).[386]

"See that wicked one, all of whose actions were designed for evil, with haughtiness of heart. Both of them offered up a sacrifice, as is written: *Balak and Balaam offered up*; and all the altars were arranged by Balak—yet that wicked one praised himself: *The seven altars I have arrayed, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar* (Numbers 23:4), not associating Balak with himself.[387]

"The blessed Holy One said, 'Wicked one, I know all! Now, *return to Balak*, and you do not have to speak; וכה תדבר

(*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and Koh shall speak* (Numbers 23:5)—*Koh shall speak* and you do not have to.' As is written: *and sense of the elders He takes away*.[388]

"Alternatively, *and sense of the elders He takes away*—as is written: *The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went, with implements of divination in their hand* (Numbers 22:7). He took the sense of those elders away from them, and they could not control their witchcraft at all.[389]

"וידברו (*Va-ydabberu*), *And they spoke, Balak's words to him* (ibid.)—openly and not quietly. He had a defective ear, a defective eye, and a defective leg. In three places he was impaired—he was suited for the Other Side, and so it should be for that side.[390]

"ויאמר (*Va-yomer*), *And he said, to them, 'Lodge here tonight'* (Numbers 22:8). Concerning them it is written *Va-ydabberu, And they spoke, to him*, whereas concerning him it is written *Va-yomer, And he said, to them*.[391]

"*Lodge here tonight*—because at that time the Other Side is accessible to sorcerers, when evil aspects appear, spreading through the world.

"*As YHVH will speak to me* (ibid.)—he was boasting of the Name of *YHVH*.[392]

"*And the chieftains of Moab stayed* (ibid.). The chieftains of Midian separated from them, not wanting to stay there, whereas the elders of Moab remained, as is written: *And the chieftains of Moab stayed*—by themselves. Midian would have done well to separate entirely, rather than eventually striking; and Scripture demonstrates their sin, as is written: *For they attacked you by their wiles that they perpetrated against you in the incident of Peor and in the incident of Cozbi daughter of the Midianite chieftain, their kinswoman*... (Numbers 25:18). In these two matters they sinned; their sin was that they struck with the tail later. So those remained with him, while these left on their own.[393]

“Alternatively, *and the chieftains of Moab stayed with Balaam*. How fine it would have been for the Midianites, if their intention had been so! However, the fact that those of Moab stayed there brought them benefit, whereas the departure of those of Midian caused them harm. Why? Because the former showed respect for the word of the blessed Holy One, whereas the latter showed no respect at all and went on their way.

“When that wicked one said, *I will reply to you as YHVH will speak to me* (Numbers 22:8), immediately those of Moab trembled at this word and stayed there, while those of Midian didn’t care about it at all and went away. Thus, *the chieftains of Moab stayed with Balaam*.[394]

“That night, this wicked one murmured incantations and cast spells, drawing upon himself a spirit from above. Instantly, *Elohim came to Balaam* (Numbers 22:9)—*Elohim*, unspecified.[395]

“*And said, ‘Who are these men with you?’* (ibid.)—it was the rung that needed to ask. Although the Companions have dealt with this in a different manner: that the blessed Holy One was testing him with His words. There were three: one was Hezekiah, one was Ezekiel, and one was Balaam. Two did not stand up to the test fittingly, and one did. Who was that? Ezekiel, as is written: ‘*Can these bones live?*’ And he replied, saying, ‘*YHVH Elohim, You alone know*’ (Ezekiel 37:3). Hezekiah said, ‘*From a distant land they came to me, from Babylon*’ (Isaiah 39:3). As for Balaam—‘*Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me*’ (Numbers 22:10), as they have established.”[396]

A certain Cuthean challenged Rabbi El’azar as follows: “I see greater power in Balaam than in Moses! For of Moses is written *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1), whereas of Balaam [200b] is written *God came to Balaam* (Numbers 22:9).”[397]

He replied, “This may be compared to a king who was sitting in his palace upon his throne. A leper called at the gate. [The king] said, ‘Who is knocking at the gate?’

“They replied, ‘Some leper.’

“He said, ‘Let him not enter here! Let him not soil the palace! I know that if I tell him by a messenger, he won’t pay any attention—he will come and contaminate my son by contact. Rather, I myself will go and threaten him, so that he’ll keep far away from my son’s residence and not contaminate him.’

“Quickly, the king went to him and threatened him, saying, ‘Leper, leper, keep your foot away from my son’s path! Otherwise, I swear that my handmaid’s sons will cut your body into pieces.’

“Then the king’s intimate friend called at the door. The king said, ‘Who is it?’

“They replied, ‘Your friend, so-and-so.’

“He said, ‘My dear friend, beloved of my soul! No other voice shall invite him, rather I alone.’

“The king called out, ‘Enter, so-and-so, beloved of my soul, my dear friend! Prepare the chambers so that I may converse with him.’

“So, Balaam—that leper, outcast from humanity—called at the gate of the King. When the King heard, He said, ‘The impure leper shall not enter and shall not soil My palace! I Myself must threaten him, so that he won’t approach the gate of My son and contaminate him.’[398]

“He said to him, ‘Leper, leper, *you shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for it is blessed* (Numbers 22:12). Do not go near My son, either for good or for evil. You are totally impure!’[399]

“But of Moses is written *He called to Moses*—the voice of the King, not some messenger.

“Another interpretation: *From the Tent of Meeting* (Leviticus 1:1)—from the holy palace, the arranged palace,

the glorious palace, toward which those above and below yearn, unable to approach.[400]

Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor." And he said, "*King of Moab*—an important king—*has sent to me*" (Numbers 22:10). *King of Moab*. Look at the arrogance of that wicked one—who didn't even respect Balak at all—as indicated by what it is written: מלך מואב (*melekh mo'av*), *king of Moab*; and he didn't say מלך למואב (*melekh le-mo'av*), *king to Moab*, which would imply "a man who is not worthy of being king and yet became king *to Moab*." Of a former one, what is written? *He had fought against the former king of Moab* (ibid. 21:26)—a king, the son of a king, esteemed like his father. But of this one is written *king to Moab* (ibid. 22:4)—Scripture attests: *king to Moab*! And we have educed that [Balaam] intended great haughtiness of heart: "All the kings of the world send their emissaries to me, and I am esteemed by them!"[401]

Rabbi Pinḥas was going to see his daughter, the mother of Rabbi El'azar, who was on her sickbed. He was accompanied by companions and was riding on his donkey. On his way he met two Arabs. He said to them, "Has a voice stirred in this field since days of old?"[402]

They replied, "About days of old we don't know; about our own days we do. Because one day some robbers—highwaymen—were crossing that field and ran into some Jews and were about to rob them, when from a distance, in this field, this donkey's voice was heard braying twice, and a flame of fire darted through that voice and burned them up, and those Jews were saved."[403]

He said to them, "Arabs, Arabs! On account of what you have told me, you will be saved today from other robbers, who are lying in wait for you on the road."

Rabbi Pinḥas wept and said, "Master of the Universe! You generated a miracle for my sake, and those Jews were

saved; and I didn’t know.”

He opened, saying, “*To the one who performs great wonders alone, for His love is forever* (Psalms 136:4). How much goodness the blessed Holy One performs for people, and no one knows but He alone! A person gets up in the morning and happens to put his foot on the head of a snake coming to kill him—he puts his foot on its head and kills it—and no one knows, except the blessed Holy One alone; thus, *to the one who performs great wonders alone*.[404]

“A person is traveling on the road, and robbers are lying in wait to kill him. Someone else comes along, who is given as ransom for him and he is saved, without knowing the goodness performed for him by the blessed Holy One and the miracle generated by Him—He alone does. *To the one who performs great wonders alone—alone* He performs and knows, and no one else knows.”[405]

He said to his companions, “Companions, [201a] what I was asking these Arabs, who are always occupied in the fields, was if they had heard the voice of the Companions, who occupy themselves with Torah. For Rabbi Shim’on and Rabbi El’azar, his son, and the other Companions are ahead of us and unaware of us; so I asked these Arabs about them, because I know that Rabbi Shim’on’s voice makes fields and mountains quake. But they revealed to me something I didn’t know.”[406]

As they went along, those Arabs returned to him, and said, “Old man! You asked us about days of old and not about today, when we saw wonder upon wonder! We saw five men sitting and one old man among them, and we saw birds gathering and spreading their wings over their heads—some going and some returning, so shade never disappeared over their heads. And that old man raised his voice, and [the birds] obeyed.”[407]

He said, “That’s what I was asking about! Arabs, Arabs, be on your way, and may the way be paved for you with whatever you wish. Two things you said in which I delight.”

They departed.[408]

His companions said to him, “How do we know where Rabbi Shim’on is?”

He replied, “Leave it to the Master of the steps of beasts, for he will guide its steps there.”[409]

With no goading, his donkey swerved from the road, proceeded for two miles, and went there. It began to bray three times. Rabbi Pinḥas dismounted and said to his companions, “Let us prepare to greet the Countenance of Days, for now the Great Face and the Small Face will emerge.”[410]

Rabbi Shim’on heard the braying of the donkey. He said to the Companions, “Let us rise, for the voice of the donkey of the pious old man has been aroused toward us.”

Rabbi Shim’on rose, and the Companions rose.

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, “*A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has worked wonders. His right hand has won victory for Him, and His holy arm* (Psalms 98:1). מזמור (*Mizmor*), *A psalm*—the accent stands erect above. We call this ‘an orphaned song,’ but it is distinguished by a grand accent because that *mizmor* comes adorned with a supernal crown above its head and comes erect.[411]

“Who uttered this song? Those cows, with the lowing that they made: ‘*Sing to YHVH a new song*.’ To whom did they say *sing*? To many chariots, to many chieftains, to many rungs who had come there, coming forth to receive the Ark, unidentified. To them they said, *Sing to YHVH a new* שיר (*shir*), *song*—masculine. Why here שיר (*shir*), whereas Moses said שירה (*shirah*), *song* (Exodus 15:1)—feminine?[412]

“Well, there, with Moses, a solitary Ark—זאת (*zot*), This—came forth from exile along with Her multitudes, and nothing more; so, *this shirah, song*, in the feminine. But here, the Ark and what was concealed within; and because of that which was concealed within, it is said *a new shir, song*, in the masculine.[413]

“*For He has worked wonders*—in what He did to the Philistines and what He did to their false gods.[414]

“[*His right hand*] *has won victory for Him*. For whom? For Himself. Who is ‘Himself’? That *mizmor, psalm*, itself, in whom is concealed a supernal holy spirit.[415]

“*His right hand*—that which the Elder inherits. This *right hand* of *His* grasps that *mizmor* and does not let it fall into the hands of another.[416]

“Here a certain matter should be revealed. Whenever that *right hand* would generate a miracle, it would grasp this *mizmor* and place it before it in order to hold it firmly. This may be compared to a father whose right hand grasps his son’s chest in front of him, saying, ‘Who dares come near my son?’ When the son offends his father, then his father puts his hand on his shoulder from behind and thrusts him into the hand of his enemies.[417]

“At first, as it were, it is written: *Your right hand, O YHVH, is glorious* בכח (*ba-koaḥ*), *in the power* (Exodus 15:6). *Ba-koaḥ, in the power*—the well-known one. In Arabia they call a person’s chest כח (*koaḥ*), power. That right hand *is glorious* and takes hold *ba-koaḥ, of the power*—‘Who dares come near My son?’ Later, what is written? *He has withdrawn His right hand* (Lamentations 2:3)—putting His right hand on his shoulder and pushing him into the hand of his enemies. At first, His right hand in front, on his chest; and later, behind, on his shoulder to push him. Here, *His right hand has won victory for Him, and His holy arm*—two arms.[418]

“If those cows, who were unaccustomed to miracles, just at that moment uttered this song as they lowed—then how much more so should the braying of the donkey of the pious old man, who is accustomed to miracles, convey song![419]

“Companions, if you say that no donkey has ever behaved in this manner since the day the world was created, go take a look at the donkey of Balaam the wicked, who vanquished her master entirely—the donkey of Rabbi

[201b] Pinḥas, how much more so! Furthermore, when Balaam's donkey spoke, a supernal angel was above her.[420]

"Now is the time to reveal. Listen, Companions! The mouth of the donkey that was created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight—would you ever imagine that the mouth remained open from that time, or that the blessed Holy One stipulated a condition from that time? Not so! There is a mystery here, transmitted to the wise, who pay no attention to stupidity. 'The mouth of the donkey'—rung of donkeys, highest on the side of females; it was this that settled upon that donkey and spoke above her. When the blessed Holy One created this rung called 'mouth of the donkey,' He enclosed it in the Hollow of the Great Abyss, sealing it away until that time. When the time came, He opened that hollow, and it emerged, settling upon her and she spoke.[421]

"Similarly, *The earth opened* את פיה (*et piha*), *its mouth* (Numbers 16:32)—*et*, amplifying the meaning to include Dumah, who is 'the mouth of the earth.' את פי האתון (*Et pi ha-aton*), *The mouth of the donkey* (ibid. 22:28)—amplifying the meaning to include Kamriel, who is called 'the mouth of the donkey.'[422]

"The mouth of the well, similarly. Who is 'the mouth of the well'? The rung appointed over it below, which is below 'the mouth of *YHVH*.' Who is that? His name is Yehadriel.[423]

"These three mouths were created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight. As the day was sanctified, the mouth appointed over all other mouths ascended. And who is that? The one sanctified and elevated in all, the one called 'mouth of *YHVH*.' On the eve of Sabbath at twilight, the other mouths were created, the day was sanctified, the mouth ruling over all ascended—'mouth of *YHVH*.'"[424]

Just then, they saw Rabbi Pinḥas coming; they went toward him. Rabbi Pinḥas came and kissed Rabbi Shim'on. He said,

“I have kissed the mouth of *YHVH*, scented with the spices of His garden!”[425]

They delighted as one and sat down. As soon as they sat, all those birds providing shade flew away and scattered. Rabbi Shim’on turned his head and shouted to them: “Birds of heaven! Have you no respect for your Master standing here?”[426]

They stopped, neither moving from their place nor coming closer.

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Tell them to go on their way, for they are not being permitted to return.”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “I know that the blessed Holy One wishes to perform a miracle for us. Birds, birds, go on your way, and tell him who is appointed over you that at first it was in his power and now it is not. But I have reserved him for the Day of the Rock, when a cloud rises between mighty teeth and they do not converge.”[427]

Those birds scattered and flew away.

Meanwhile, look: three trees spreading branches in three directions over them, and a spring of water gushing in front of them! All the Companions rejoiced; Rabbi Pinḥas and Rabbi Shim’on rejoiced.[428]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “It was so much trouble for those birds at first, and we don’t want living creatures to be troubled, for it is written: *His compassion is upon all His creatures* (Psalms 145:9).”[429]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “I didn’t trouble them; but if the blessed Holy One is kind to us, we cannot reject His gifts.”

They sat down beneath that tree, drank from the water, and enjoyed themselves there.

Rabbi Pinḥas opened, saying, “*A spring of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon* (Song of Songs 4:15). *A spring of gardens*—now, is the only *spring* one *of gardens*? Look, there are many good and precious springs in the world! Ah, but not all pleasures are equal. There is a spring issuing in the desert, in a parched place—

a pleasure for one who sits and drinks. But *a spring of gardens*—how good and precious! That spring benefits plants and fruit. Whoever approaches it enjoys everything: he enjoys the water, he enjoys the fruit. That spring is adorned with everything, surrounded by so many roses, so many fragrant herbs! How much finer is that spring than other springs, *a well of living waters*!

"We have established as follows: All refers to Assembly of Israel. She is *a spring of gardens*. Who are *gardens?* The blessed Holy One has five gardens in which He delights, and one spring above them—watering and saturating them, hidden and concealed—and they all yield fruit and vegetation. There is one garden below them, and that garden is guarded all around in every direction. Below this garden are other gardens, yielding fruit of each kind. And this garden turns into a spring, watering them.[430]

"*A well of living waters*—when necessary it becomes *a spring*, and when necessary it becomes *a well*. What is the difference between them? There is no comparison between water flowing [202a] by itself and water drawn for watering.[431]

"*And streams from Lebanon*. What is meant by *streams*? These *streams* turn into *a spring* when water flows and drops stream above, one after another—sweet water pursued by the soul. Thus those five sources issuing *from Lebanon* above become *streams* for this *spring*. So the blessed Holy One has performed a miracle for us right here, and for this spring, I proclaim this verse!"[432]

He opened again, saying, "*When you besiege a city many days, waging battle against it to seize it, you shall not destroy its trees, wielding an axe against them; for you shall eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a human, to withdraw before you in the siege?* (Deuteronomy 20:19). *When you besiege a city*. How fine are the ways and paths of Torah, for every single word

of Torah contains so much counsel, so many benefits for human beings, so many pearls sparkling in all directions! You cannot find a word in the Torah that does not contain numerous lamps radiating in every direction. This verse accords with its simple sense, and it includes a midrashic meaning, and also supernal wisdom, enlightening whoever needs it.[433]

"Happy is the share of one who engages in Torah constantly! What is written of him? *But the Torah of YHVH is his delight, and on His Torah he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree* (Psalms 1:2–3). Why is this adjoined to that? Well, whoever engages in Torah *day and night* should not be like a parched tree, but rather like what? *Like a tree planted by streams of water*. Just as a tree has roots, bark, pith, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit—these seven types amounting to ten, and ten to seventy—so words of Torah have a simple sense, midrashic meaning, a hint alluding to wisdom, *gimatriyya'ot*, hidden mysteries, sealed mysteries, one above the other; unfit and fit, impure and pure, forbidden and permitted. From here on, branches spread out in every direction. *He shall be like a tree*, surely! And if not, he is not a master of wisdom.[434]

"Come and see how beloved are those who engage in Torah before the blessed Holy One! For even when Judgment looms over the world and permission is given to the Destroyer to destroy, the blessed Holy One commands him concerning those engaged in Torah. The blessed Holy One says to him as follows: '*When you besiege a city*—for the sins they have committed against Me are numerous and they have been found guilty.'[435]

"*Many days*. What is meant by *many*? Three consecutive days, by which a plague is attested in the city. How do we know that *many days* signifies three days? As is written: *When a woman has a flux of blood for many days* (Leviticus 15:25). Now, are they really *many days*? Rather, three consecutive days are called *many days*. Here, too: *When*

you besiege a city many days—three consecutive days, attesting a plague in the city.[436]

"'Come, and I will instruct you concerning the members of My household: *You shall not destroy its tree*—a scholar who is in the city, for this is a tree of life, a tree bearing fruit.'[437]

"עצה (*Etsah*), *its tree*—the one who is עיטא (*eita*), counsel, of the city, and gives counsel to the city on how to be saved from Judgment, teaching them the path that they should follow. So, *You shall not destroy its tree, wielding an axe against it*—wielding Judgment against him and brandishing a flashing sword over him, a whetted sword, the one that slays other people of the world.[438]

"*For* ממנו תאכל (*mi-mennu tokhel*), *you shall eat from it*. Now does that Destroyer eat of him? No. Rather, *For mi-mennu tokhel, She shall eat from him*—this mighty Rock, the one from whom issue all mighty holy spirits. For the Holy Spirit has no other pleasure or desire in this world other than the Torah of that righteous one. He, as it were, sustains Her and provides food for Her in this world more than all the sacrifices of the world.[439]

"What is written about a sacrifice? *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. Eat, companions!* (Song of Songs 5:1). But ever since the day that the Temple was destroyed and sacrifices ceased, the blessed Holy One has nothing but words of Torah, and the Torah that is innovated in the mouth of [one devoted to study]. So, *For tokhel, She shall eat, from him*, and She has no food in this world except *from him* and from those like him. Since *She shall eat from him*, and he nourishes Her, *you shall not cut him down*—'Be careful not to come near him!'[440]

"*For* האדם (*ha-adam*), *the human, is* [202b] *a tree of the field*—this one is called *adam, a human*, who is renowned above and below.[441]

"*A tree of the field*—a great and mighty tree, supporting the *field blessed by YHVH* (Genesis 27:27), a tree always

known intimately to that field.[442]

"*To withdraw before you in the siege*—this phrase relates to the beginning of the verse, as is written: *You shall not destroy* עצה (*etsah*), *its tree*. The one who gives them עיטא (*eita*), advice, and prepares the city *to withdraw before you in the siege*, advises them to mend themselves and turn back in *teshuvah*, and he prepares weapons for them: spiral trumpets and shofars.[443]

"לבא מפניך (*Lavo mi-panekha*), *To withdraw before you*. What is meant by *lavo mi-panekha, to come before you*? *Lavo, To come*, to Me, and to withdraw *mi-panekha, before you*, because of their fear of you.[444]

"במצור (*Ba-matsor*), *In the siege*—in a place where those above and those below cannot enter. And what is that? A rung attained by masters of *teshuvah*. What is *teshuvah*? *Matsor*, A bastion, a mighty place, a mighty Rock.[445]

"'Since they accept this advice, I forgive their sins, and they are received in favor before Me.'

"All this the blessed Holy One commands concerning those who engage in Torah. Therefore, happy are those who do so! They are mighty trees in this world.[446]

"See what the blessed Holy One has done, planting these trees! Happy is this path! As if one tree wouldn't have been enough, the blessed Holy One has produced for us three grand trees, spreading their branches in every direction. May it be the will of Heaven that these trees and this spring never be removed from this place."[447]

And until this day, they stand there, along with that spring of water, and people call them "The Plantation of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir."

Rabbi Shim'on opened, saying, "*He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, 'Who are these with you?' He said, 'The children with whom God has favored your servant'* (Genesis 33:5). Come and see: That wicked Esau ogled women, and on account of him Jacob

took precautions, placing the slave-girls in front, and their children, who were more important, behind; then Leah behind them, with her children following; then Rachel and her son, Joseph; *and he himself passed before them* (ibid., 3).[448]

"When they all bowed down, what is written? *The slave-girls drew near, they and their children, and they bowed low*; and then it is written: *Leah, too, and her children drew near, and they bowed low; and afterward Joseph and Rachel* (ibid., 6–7). But Joseph was last, and Rachel in front [of him]! However, when Joseph—the good son, loving son, Righteous One of the World—saw the eye of that wicked one staring at the women, he was afraid for his mother; so he came out from behind her and spread his arms and his body, covering her so that the wicked one would not ogle her. How much was he enlarged? Six cubits in every direction, covering her so that the eye of that wicked one was powerless against her.[449]

"Similarly, *Balaam raised* עיניו (*einav*), *his eyes* (Numbers 24:2)—spelled עינו (*eino*), *his eye*: that evil eye. He raised two eyes, but when he sought to gaze, he shut one eye and opened that defective one, that evil eye.[450]

"*And saw Israel encamped by its tribes* (ibid.). What is meant by *encamped by its tribes*? Well, the tribe of Joseph was there and the tribe of Benjamin. Over the tribe of Joseph, the evil eye has no power, as is written: *A fruitful son is Joseph* (Genesis 49:22). What is meant by בן פורת (*ben porat*), *a fruitful son*? That he was enlarged to cover his mother. *A fruitful son* עלי עין (*alei ayin*), *overcoming the eye*—for the evil eye is powerless against him.[451]

"As for the tribe of Benjamin, it is written: *Between His shoulders he dwells*, and also: *He dwells securely* (Deuteronomy 33:12). What is meant by *securely*? That he has no fear of the evil eye or of evil mishaps.[452]

"That wicked one said, 'I'll remove this line, so that it doesn't exist. I'll glare fittingly!'[453]

“Rachel was there, and She saw that the eye of that wicked one was sharpened to inflict harm. What did She do? She came out and spread Her wings over them, covering Her children. As it is written: *Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped by its tribes*. As soon as the Holy Spirit saw that his eye was sharpened, instantly *the spirit of God was upon him*. Upon whom? Upon Israel, for She spread Her wings over them, covering them. Immediately, that wicked one retreated.[454]

“At first, the son covered the mother; and now, the mother covered the son. At the time when he covered his mother, Rachel, so that the eye of that evil one would be powerless against her, the blessed Holy One said, ‘By your life! When another evil eye comes to glare at your children and My children, your mother will cover them. You covered your mother; your mother will cover you!’[455]

“*He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children* (Genesis 33:5). This verse was spoken in the mystery of wisdom. On Yom Kippur—when the inhabitants of the world stand in judgment before the blessed Holy One, atoning for their sins, and that Accuser stands over them, intending to destroy them for their sins—they send him that gift; and then is written *For he thought, ‘Let me appease his face with the gift that goes before me’* (ibid. 32:21). After he receives the gift, that Accuser raises his eyes and sees Israel—all of them afflicting themselves with fasting, barefoot. He sees women, he sees children—all of them fasting, all of them [203a] completely cleansed. *And he said*, ‘מי אלה (*Mi elleh*), *Who are these, with you*? (ibid. 33:5)—the Holy Name is *with you*.’[456]

“*Who are these with you*?—asking about the children.[457]

“*He said, ‘The children whom God has graciously given your servant’* (Genesis 33:5). Now, why did he have to answer him at all? Well, once he accepts that bribe, he turns into an advocate for them. He raises his eyes and sees

Israel like this, and he thinks that they are acting so due to fear of him.[458]

"He asks about the children, saying, '*Who are these with you*?' What is meant by *Who are these with you*? Well, he is saying, 'Granted, for you [to be fasting], since you sinned against the King; but these children—what are they doing here? *Who are these with you*?'[459]

"*He said, 'The children'*—the Holy Spirit is speaking, and so the accent stands erect: ויאמר (*va-yomar*), *He said*, in a concealed manner.[460]

"*Whom God has graciously given your servant*. Now, would the Holy Spirit say *your servant*? Well, the Holy Spirit says, 'These are children who did not sin and never tasted sin; and the blessed Holy One delivered them into the hand of that minister of yours, who killed them, although they were guiltless—as is said: *On the side of their tormentors, power* (Ecclesiastes 4:1). This is the meaning of *your servant*.[461]

"As soon as he hears about those children, he immediately ascends to the blessed Holy One and says, 'Master of the Universe, all Your ways in judgment are true. If judgment prevails upon Israel, it is because of their sins. Their children who have not sinned against You—why have You handed them over to be killed although they were guiltless?'[462]

"The blessed Holy One accepts his words in this matter and has mercy on them, and at that time there is no diphtheria among the children.[463]

"That Accuser then becomes jealous of the minister under his command, and says, 'Now, did the blessed Holy One give me those who are clothed in sins and transgressions, whereas to that minister of mine He handed over children without sin, who have never tasted sin?' Immediately, he goes to extricate them from his grasp, so that he should have no power over them. Therefore, [the Holy Spirit] hastens to say to him, '*The children whom God*

has graciously given to that *servant* of yours'—without any sin or transgression. And so that his minister will not be more highly praised than him, he seeks to extricate them from his hands.[464]

"When the prayers of Israel ascend on this day before the Holy King, what is written? *He himself passed before them* (Genesis 33:3)—the Holy Spirit passes before them, as is said: *Their king will pass before them* (Micah 2:13); *He himself*, surely, *passed before them*![465]

"*And bowed to the ground seven times* (Genesis 33:3)—diminishing Himself toward the one above. *Seven times*—seven times corresponding to seven supernal rungs above Him. He reduces Himself so as to include them with Him, every single one.[466]

"*Until he drew near his brother* (ibid.)—to that rung of Compassion, for they are Son and Daughter. Son—*My son, My firstborn, Israel* (Exodus 4:22). Daughter—Assembly of Israel; Holy Spirit diminishing itself *until he drew near his brother*.[467]

"As soon as She reaches Him, She beseeches Him, informing Him of their children's distress below. They both enter the hidden, concealed palace of Yom Kippur—their Mother—seeking atonement for Israel. Then it is written: *For on this day He will effect atonement for you, to purify you* (Leviticus 16:30). It is not written *I will effect atonement for you*, but rather *He will effect atonement for you*.[468]

"Now, *the children*—these wise ones here—the blessed Holy One has given them mysteries of Torah with which to be crowned and adorned. The evil eye has no power over them because of the good eye, the Holy Spirit of Rabbi Pinḥas, settling upon them!"[469]

Rabbi Pinḥas came and kissed him. He said, "If I have come on this way just to hear these words, it is enough for me! Happy is this path that led me to you![470]

“The blessed Holy One is here, confirming us. As if one tree wouldn’t be enough, there are three! But this spring is a sublime image of that hidden, concealed spring. These three trees are three cedars, called Cedars of Lebanon, and they are the image of three great trees, mystery of the Patriarchs. Happy is our share!”[471]

At that moment, the trees inclined—one over the head of Rabbi Shim’on, one over the head of Rabbi Pinḥas, and one over the head of Rabbi El’azar. Branches spread in every direction over the heads of the Companions. Rabbi Pinḥas wept, and said, “Happy is my share, and happy are my eyes that see this! Not only over mine and over yours do I delight, but over Rabbi El’azar, our son, who is esteemed before the Holy King as one of us.”[472]

He rose and kissed him.[473]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “El’azar, stand erect and utter before your Master His words!”[474]

Rabbi El’azar rose. [203b] He opened, saying, “*My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab plotted, and what Balaam son of Beor answered him*. [*Recall your journey*] *from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know* [*the saving acts of* YHVH] (Micah 6:5). *My people*—How compassionate a father to his sons is the blessed Holy One! Even though they have sinned against Him, all His words are like a father toward his son. A father’s son sins against him, and he beats him. As much as he beats him, he does not turn back from his way. He scolds him with words, but he does not listen. The father says, ‘I don’t want to continue treating my son as I have been until today. If I beat him, his head will hurt—look, his pain is felt by me! If I scold him, his features change. What will I do? I can only go and plead with him, speaking to him in gentle words so that he won’t be saddened.’[475]

“So in all kinds of ways the blessed Holy One proceeds with Israel. He began by beating them, and they did not submit; He rebuked them, and they did not submit. The

blessed Holy One said, ‘I see in My children, that because of the beatings I gave them, their heads hurt. Woe, for as a result of their pain, I hurt too—as is written: *In all their affliction* לו צר (*lo tsar*), *He was afflicted* (Isaiah 63:9). I rebuked them; their features changed—as is written: *Their appearance is darker than coal, they are not recognized in the streets* (Lamentations 4:8). Woe, when I gaze upon them and they are unrecognizable! Now, I will plead before them in supplication: *My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you*? (Micah 6:3)—My son, My only one, beloved of My soul, *what have I done to you?* I have made you ruler over all members of My palace. I have made you ruler over all kings of the world. And if I have done other things to you, *testify against Me*—you can bear witness against Me!’[476]

“*My people, remember please what Balak king of Moab plotted, and what Balaam son of Beor answered him. Remember please*—‘Remember, I beg of you.’ *What* [*Balak king of Moab*] *plotted*. Now we should examine: what was Balak’s plot against the Holy People? And the Torah doesn’t consider Balak anything compared to someone who once existed—as is written: *An Aramean was destroying my father*… (Deuteronomy 26:5)….”[477]

‘… The image and form of His Father was stamped upon Him, really! And from the time that He was in His Mother’s womb, from Her side was stretched a further step, extending outside. This is the form and image of His Father, really. Since He was in His Mother’s womb, אשורנו (*ashurennu*), *I will gaze upon him* (Numbers 23:9)—‘I will stretch a step outside,’ like this: ו (*vav*). This is: ומגבעות אשורנו (*u-mi-geva’ot ashurennu*), *and from hills I will step* (ibid.).[478]

“In the Supreme Academy: גבעת (*geva’ot*), *hills*—deficient, without a ו (*vav*); loftiest of all, the most sublime of all. In the Heavenly Academy: ומגבעות (*u-mi-geva’ot*), *and from hills*, with the letter ו (*vav*), completing both sides. One, for this גבעת

(*giv'at*), *hill*, never parts from Her Son nor abandons Him; so this *vav* is included with it eternally. And the other, for this גבעה (*giv'ah*), hill, below—Her son, included within Her, must (in the time to come, when King Messiah comes) be taken by Higher *Giv'at*, who brings Him beneath Her wings, to strengthen Him and establish Him in supernal life. From Her will emerge on that day the Messiah of David.[479]

"This is the mystery of *Let me tell to the decree: YHVH said to me, 'You are My son; today I have begotten you'* (Psalms 2:7)—I am destined to speak to that place called חק (*ḥoq*), *decree*, bringing good news….[480]

"*He said to me, 'You are My son; today I have begotten you'* (ibid.). That very day She will bring him out from under Her wings, with much life, with many crowns, with many blessings, fittingly. And that *decree* does not remain alone; included in it is another Messiah, son of Joseph—there he will be strengthened, nowhere else. Since it is Lower *Giv'ah*, who has no life, this Messiah will die and be killed and remain dead for a time, until this *giv'ah* gathers life and he rises.[481]

"Consequently, in the Heavenly Academy: ומגבעות (*u-mi-geva'ot*), complete with the letter ו (*vav*), written regarding both these aspects. But in the Supreme Academy: lacking the *vav*, to indicate something that includes no difficulty or doubt.[482]

"*Look, a people that dwells alone* (Numbers 23:9)—unified, with no other admixture.

"The whole perfect union is here: יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH eḥad*), *YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4). For its mystery is *from the cliff tops* (Numbers 23:9), and it is unified with stock and path. *YHVH*—a lofty head, air ascending. *Eloheinu*—a stock, as is said: *the stock of Jesse* (Isaiah 11:1). *YHVH*—a path below. By this mystery, unification coalesces fittingly; and since a path is extended within it, there must be…[483]

“… a mystery decreed in two Academies. Happy is your share, Rabbi, for you have attained supernal words, for your Lord delights in you![484]

“How great the measure of the extent of this path, by sublime measurement of head, [204a] stock, and path, clothed in this extension! So, extension of אחד (*eḥad*), *one*—a measure of six aspects, all united in this letter. Therefore, *that dwells alone*, fittingly.[485]

“*Among the nations it is not reckoned* (Numbers 23:9). Israel has a script and a language, and in every letter they can gaze upon the form and image fittingly. But *among the nations* this mystery *is not reckoned*, since they have no script and language, and they cannot gaze and know anything—for after all, *they are vanity, works of delusion* (Jeremiah 10:15). This mystery *is not reckoned* in their thought and speculation, since they have no script. Happy is Israel![486]

“*Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered the seed of Israel?* (Numbers 23:10). מי (*Mi*), *Who*: This supernal point—head, stock, and path—is in concealment, not susceptible to questioning from outside. But from the moment that it begins to be built, forming a palace according to its wish, it is called *Mi, Who*. Its actual form begins to be built; it generates His Female, in the image of His Mother.[487]

“Who is *Mi*? Head, stock, and path: י (*yod*). It spreads out to be built in an extension of one palace, building in two directions. Although it generates Israel—who is ו (*vav*)—it similarly generates His Female together, inviting Her to approach Him.[488]

“מנה (*Manah*), *has counted*—as is said: וימן להם המלך (*Va-yman lahem ha-melekh*), *The king provided them* (Daniel 1:5); *and sending* מנות (*manot*), *portions* (Esther 9:22). He gave Him a great and precious gift, generating it as one from Him. In that extension spreading, He generated both of them as one, like this: י (*Yod*) extends here and there, generating Son

and Daughter in a single moment. Thus, heaven and earth were created in a moment, as one, simultaneously.[489]

"*Or numbered a fourth of Israel*. רובע ישראל (*Rova Yisra'el*), *a fourth of Israel*—this mystery has been transmitted for your sake. Happy is your share, Rabbi! *Rova Yisra'el, a fourth of Israel*—a fourth of the measurement of Israel is Covenant. Why is it called *a fourth?* Well, the measurement of the Body includes four Covenants, and Covenant is one-fourth of the calculated measurement of the Body. All is generated by *Mi, Who*." [206b][490]

Balak son of Zippor saw [*all that Israel had done to the Amorites*] (Numbers 22:2).[491]

Rabbi Yose opened, "*Do not eat the bread of him who has an evil eye* (Proverbs 23:6)—Balaam, who blessed Israel. *Nor desire his delicacies* (ibid.)—Balak, for whose ascent offerings that he arranged before Him the blessed Holy One had no desire.[492]

"Come and see: When Balak saw that Sihon and Og, and so on. 'Saw'—what did he see, that Scripture says [*Balak*] *saw*? Well, he saw in his wisdom that he along with five eminences of Midian and his people were falling into the hands of Israel. He saw, yet he did not know, so he immediately approached Balaam, whose power was in his mouth, like Israel, whose power is in their mouths.[493]

"Balaam was even more eager than Balak. The knowledge that he discovered was in the night, for those lower crowns and donkeys prevail only in the first watch of the night. Therefore he had a jenny from this side, so that male donkeys could join [207a] with her at the beginning of night.[494]

"Now, if you say, 'Look at what is written: *Elohim came to Balaam in the night* (Numbers 22:20)'—certainly so! And we have established that this refers to that prince appointed over them, and he was approaching him.

Similarly, *Elohim came to Laban the Aramean…* (Genesis 31:24). All is one entity. Therefore he said to the chieftains of Balak, *Lodge here tonight*, [*and I will reply to you as YHVH will speak to me*] (Numbers 22:8).[495]

"When that prince would arrive, Balaam would settle down next to his jenny and perform his deed and utter certain words. Then the jenny informed him, and he demonstrated an act for that spirit to settle upon him.[496]

"What did he demonstrate? He knew that male donkeys roam and appear at the beginning of the night. So he demonstrated an act, and set his jenny at a prepared spot, performed his rites, arranged words—and then came the one who came, informing him through that jenny.[497]

"Since one night he told him *You shall not go with them* (Numbers 22:12), why did he return to this a second time? Well, those are subject to higher authority, and we have already learned: 'On the path one wishes to take he is led.' First it is written *You shall not go with them;* once the blessed Holy One saw that his desire was to go, He said to him, *Rise, go with them. But only the word that I speak* [*to you shall you do*] (Numbers 22:20).[498]

"What did Balaam do? All that night he was wondering, 'What now? Where is my honor if I am bound in another bond?' That whole night he examined his witchcraft, and found that the only aspect by which he could be under his own authority was that of his jenny.[499]

"This corresponds to what Rabbi Yitsḥak said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah: Among these lower crowns there is right and there is left. On the right side male donkeys, as we have established, and on the left side jennies."[500]

It has been taught: There are ten to the right and ten to the left, corresponding to what Rabbi Yose said: When Joseph parted from his father, he knew of sublime wisdom, mystery of holy supernal crowns. While he was in Egypt, he learned of that wisdom of theirs, those lower crowns—how those on the right and those on the left are linked: ten on

the right and ten on the left, male donkeys and jennies. So he hinted to his father about what he had learned there, as is written: *To his father he sent as follows: ten male donkeys conveying from the best of Egypt, and ten jennies…* (Genesis 45:23).[501]

Rabbi Yose said, "Those on the right all merge into one called חמור (*ḥamor*), donkey, and this is the donkey of which is written *Do not plow with an ox and a donkey* (Deuteronomy 22:10). This is the *donkey* that King Messiah is destined to rule, as we have established.[502]

"Those on the left all merge into one called אתון (*aton*), jenny, for from her side issues עירה (*iroh*)—accusation against children, as we have established. This corresponds to what is written: *Humble and riding on a donkey—on* עיר (*ayir*), *a he-ass, foaled by* אתונת (*atonot*), *a she-ass* (Zechariah 9:9)—spelled deficiently: ten merging into one.[503]

"This is what Rabbi Shim'on said: What is meant by the verse *He binds* לגפן עירה (*la-gefen iroh*), *to the vine his he-ass, to the noble vine* בני אתנו (*beni atono*), *his she-ass's foal* (Genesis 49:11)? *He binds la-gefen, for the vine*: the blessed Holy One intends to bind—for the sake of Israel, who are called *vine*—*iroh, his he-ass*, who is their accusation. And because they are called *noble vine*—as is written: *I planted you as a noble vine* (Jeremiah 2:21)—*beni atono, his she-ass's foal*, the one issuing from the side of this אתון (*aton*), she-ass.[504]

"These ten on the right and ten on the left—all included in these two—pertain to קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry*; and there are another ten on the right and ten on the left pertaining to נחש (*naḥash*), *sorcery*. Therefore it is written: *Surely there is no naḥash, sorcery, in Jacob, no* קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry, in Israel* (Numbers 23:23). Why? Because *YHVH his God is with him* (ibid., 21).[505]

"From the side of *naḥash, sorcery*, issues שור (*shor*), an ox—and this is *an ox and a donkey*.[506]

"So, since Balaam knew that he was bound to another authority—who told him *But only the word that I speak to*

you [*shall you do*]—he was distressed. He said, 'What now? Where is my honor?' Immediately, he examined his sorceries, but found nothing that would be in his control except for this *aton*, jenny.[507]

"Immediately, *Balaam rose early in the morning and saddled his jenny* (Numbers 22:21)—to fulfill through her his desire and the desire of Balak. Therefore, *God's wrath flared because* הולך הוא (*holekh hu*), *he was going* (Numbers 22:22)—*hu, he*, precisely! For he removed himself from His authority, from what He told him: *Nevertheless, only the word* [*that I speak to you shall you do*].[508]

"Come and see that it is so. For at first He gave him permission and said, *Rise, go with them*. So now that he was going, why did *God's wrath flare*? Well, because *holekh hu, he was going—hu, he*, on his own authority, leaving the one who told him *Nevertheless, only the word*.[509]

"The blessed Holy One said to him, [207b] 'Wicked one, you are preparing and girding your weapon to escape My authority. By your life, you and your jenny will remain in My control.' Immediately, *the angel of YHVH stationed himself in the road as an adversary to him* (Numbers 22:22)."[510]

What is meant by *he stationed himself*?

Rabbi Abba said, "He left and engaged in a different craft than his usual one, for this one was an angel of Compassion. This corresponds to what Rabbi Shim'on said: 'The wicked turn Compassion into Judgment.' *As an adversary to him*—since this was not his craft.[511]

Rabbi El'azar said, "The angel did not change, nor did he abandon his craft. Rather, since this angel was from the side of Compassion, standing opposite him, he nullified his wisdom and ruined his will. As is written: *as an adversary to him—to him* he was *an adversary*, looming as *an adversary*; but to someone else he was no *adversary*."[512]

It was taught: Rabbi Shim'on said, "How much wiser was Balaam in his witchcraft than all inhabitants of the world! For when he gazed to find counsel on escaping the

control of the blessed Holy One—from that statement that is written: *But only the word* [*that I speak to you shall you do*]—he examined his sorceries and found nothing but that jenny. What is written? *He saddled his jenny*—loading her with all the sorceries and wizardries he knew, conveying them into her, comprising her of them all, so as to curse Israel.[513]

"Immediately, *God's wrath flared because* הולך הוא (*holekh hu*), *he was going—hu, he*, precisely, as has been said. What did the blessed Holy One do? He provided an angel of Compassion to confront him and nullify his sorcery and wizardry.[514]

"Come and see: Until now, *YHVH* is not written, and is unbefitting for his wizardry and sorcery, as we have already established. Now, once he had prepared his jenny—equipping her with the arrayal of his sorceries on the side of Judgment, to curse Israel—the blessed Holy One provided an angel of Compassion against him, with the name of Compassion, in order to nullify his wisdom and to divert his jenny from that way, as is written: *The jenny swerved from the way* (Numbers 22:23)—*from the way*, precisely! Therefore it is not written *The angel of Elohim stationed himself*; *the angel of Elohim stood*—but rather, *the angel of YHVH*, of Compassion.[515]

"The blessed Holy One said, 'Wicked one, you loaded your jenny with your sorcery, with many aspects of Judgment against My children! I will remove your load and your bundle from this way.' Immediately, He provided an angel of Compassion *as an adversary to him—to him*, precisely, as has been said."[516]

The jenny saw the angel of YHVH stationed in the road… (Numbers 22:23).[517]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Now, why did she see, whereas Balaam, who was so wise, did not see?"

Rabbi Yose replied, “Perish the thought that that wicked one would behold a holy vision!”[518]

He said to him, “If so, look at what is written: *falling and eyes uncovered* (Numbers 24:4)!”[519]

He replied, “I haven’t heard anything about this, so I cannot say.”[520]

He said to him, “I have heard that when he needed to gaze, he would fall and see, but now he did not need to.”[521]

He replied, “If so, he occupied a higher rung than all the prophets of faith, since with *eyes uncovered* he saw and gazed upon the glory of the blessed Holy One. And yet Rabbi Shim’on has said, ‘Through his sorcery, Balaam knew of those lower crowns below, as is written: *Balaam son of Beor*, הקוסם (*ha-qosem*), *the soothsayer* (Joshua 13:22)—Scripture calls him *qosem, soothsayer*, filthiest of filth.’ So how could he gaze upon the glory of his Lord?[522]

“Furthermore, Rabbi Shim’on has said, ‘By one vision that he beheld momentarily—as is written: *God unveiled Balaam’s eyes* (Numbers 22:31)—his eyes were contorted.’ So how can you say that he saw with eyes uncovered and gazed upon the glory of the blessed Holy One?”[523]

He said, “I respond to you: both yours and mine require clarification. Mysteries of Torah are surely sublime, and inhabitants of the world cannot comprehend them. It is therefore forbidden to introduce a word of Torah until one hears that word and knows it thoroughly.”[524]

They came to Rabbi Shim’on and stated the matter before him.

He opened, saying, “*What is a human that You are mindful of him*… ? (Psalms 8:5). This verse was uttered by princes of the world. When an impulse arose in the Will of the blessed Holy One to create a human being, He summoned numerous cohorts of celestial angels and set them before Him. He said to them, ‘I wish to create a human.’

"They said to Him, '*The human will not abide in glory…* (Psalms 49:13).' The blessed Holy One stretched out His finger and burned them.[525]

"He seated other cohorts before Him; He said to them, 'I wish to create a human.'

"They said to Him, [208a] '*What is a human that You are mindful of him*? What is the nature of this human being?'

"He said to them, 'A human who will be in our image, whose wisdom will be superior to yours.'[526]

"Once He created Adam, and he sinned and was sentenced before Him, Uzza and Aza'el came. They said to Him, 'We have an opening to criticize You. Look, the human that You made sinned against You!'[527]

"He replied, 'If you would be with them…'

"What did the blessed Holy One do? He cast them down from their holy rung in heaven."[528]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Now I return to your answer—as to why Balaam said *falling and eyes uncovered*. If we say that it was not so, and that he was just boasting about himself, how could the blessed Holy One write a false statement in the Torah? And if it is a word of truth, how could that wicked one glory in a rung higher than all prophets of faith? Furthermore, holiness from above settles only in a place befitting it.[529]

"Now I return to the original subject. After the blessed Holy One cast them down from their holy place, and they strayed after women of the world and led the world astray —[530]

"Here one should examine. Look at what is written: *He makes His angels spirits…* (Psalms 104:4). Surely these were angels! Well, come and see: None of those angels above exists, or can exist, except by supernal light illumining them, sustaining them. If that light is cut off from them, they cannot endure. All the more so, these—who were cast down by the blessed Holy One and from whom that light above was cut off—for their radiance changed.

And when they descended, and were dominated by the world's atmosphere, they changed to another rung.[531]

"Come and see: The manna that descended for Israel in the desert—that manna came from dew on high, descending from the Ancient One, concealed of all concealed. As it descended, its light illumined all worlds, and the Apple Orchard and celestial angels were nourished by it. When it descended below, and was dominated by the world's atmosphere, it congealed and its radiance changed, and its radiance was only as is written: *The manna was like coriander seed*… (Numbers 11:7), nothing more. All the more so, these—having descended and been dominated by the atmosphere, they changed from that original rung they were.[532]

"What did the blessed Holy One do? Seeing that they were leading the world astray, He bound them in iron chains in the Mountains of Darkness. Where do they dwell? In the depths of the mountains He set Uzza, flinging darkness in his face, because when the blessed Holy One bound him, he struggled, provoking anger above, so the blessed Holy One cast him into the depths up to his neck and threw darkness in his face. As for Aza'el, who did not struggle, He placed him nearby, and illumined the darkness for him.[533]

"Inhabitants of the world who know where they are located go to them, and they teach people witchcraft, sorcery, and wizardry. Those Mountains of Darkness are called הררי קדם (*harerei qedem*), the mountains of Qedem. Why? Because darkness אקדים (*aqdim*), precedes, light; so the Mountains of Darkness are called the Mountains of Qedem. Laban and Balaam learned sorcery from them, and this accords with what Balaam said: *From Aram did Balak lead me, the king of Moab*, מהררי קדם (*me-harerei qedem*), *from the mountains of Qedem* (Numbers 23:7).[534]

"Come and see: Balaam boasted of this place, saying *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of God*… (Numbers

24:16), because Uzza and Aza'el would tell those inhabitants of the world some of the sublime matters that they knew originally above, and they would talk about the holy world in which they used to be. As is written: *who hears the sayings of God*—it is not written *who hears the voice of God*, but rather *the sayings of God*, those sayings that they reported from Him. When someone comes from a lecture [on Torah], and is asked 'Where are you coming from?' he replies, 'From listening to the words of the Holy King.' Similarly, *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of God*.[535]

"*And knows the knowledge of the Most High* (Numbers 24:16)—for he knew the time when Judgment looms over the world, and he could determine the moment precisely by his sorcery.[536]

"*Who beholds a vision of Shaddai* (ibid.). Who is *a vision of Shaddai? Falling and eyes uncovered*, namely Uzza and Aza'el. *Falling* is Uzza, whom the blessed Holy One plunged into the depth of darkness, and who dwells in that depth up to his neck, as we have said, and darkness was thrown into his face. So he is called *falling*—he fell once, and he fell afterward into the depth of darkness.[537]

"Aza'el is *eyes uncovered*, because darkness was not thrown upon him, since he did not struggle nor provoke anger above like the one mentioned above. [208b] Balaam called them *a vision of Shaddai*, namely *falling and eyes uncovered*.[538]

"At that time, there was no one left in the world who associated with them except for him; and every day he would shut himself away with them in those mountains, as is written: *Balak, the king of Moab, did lead me* מהררי קדם (*me-harerei qedem*), *from the mountains of Qedem—from the mountains of Qedem*, surely, and not מארץ בני קדם (*me-erets benei qedem*), *from the land of the people of Qedem*."[539]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "How many times have I said this—yet the Companions do not contemplate—that the blessed

Holy One settles only in a holy place, in a place fitting to settle upon! Now, would the blessed Holy One declare: *There shall not be found among you one who passes his son or his daughter through fire*, קוסם קסמים (*qosem qesamim*), *diviner of divinations*... (Deuteronomy 18:10)—and then come to mingle among them?[540]

"But happy is the share of Israel, that the blessed Holy One has sanctified them to dwell among them! This corresponds to what is written: *For YHVH your God walks about in the midst of your camp* (Deuteronomy 23:15), and because He *walks about in the midst of your camp*, it is written *your camp shall be holy, so that He not see among you anything indecent and turn back from you* (ibid.). And it is written: *You shall be holy, for I, YHVH, am holy*; and it is written *Do not be defiled through all of these, for through all of these the nations were defiled* (Leviticus 18:24); and it is written *I loathed them* (ibid. 20:23)—'I cannot come near them; they cause Me to dwell outside.' Happy is the share of Israel, and happy is the share of the faithful, holy prophets, who are themselves holy and have a share in wielding holiness above!"[541]

The jenny saw the angel of YHVH stationed in the way (Numbers 22:23)—in that way in which he was immersed.[542]

His sword unsheathed in his hand (ibid.). Now, if he came out to confront this jenny, why did he need a sword? And if he came out to confront Balaam, why did the jenny see, whereas [Balaam] did not?[543]

Well, he was intended for all. That angel was intended for the jenny, to remove her from that 'way' with which she was burdened. How? By Compassion. And he was intended for Balaam, to punish him for wanting to follow his own authority rather than another authority.[544]

Rabbi Yose said, "Now a question should be raised: If his words came from the side of lower crowns, and from

nowhere else, why is it written *But only the word that I speak to you shall you do* (Numbers 22:20)?”[545]

Rabbi Yitsḥak replied, “For the sake of Israel, the angel returned to speak with him. And if you say that the blessed Holy One spoke with him, and He said *But only the word*—perish the thought! For look, that angel said to him, *Nevertheless, the word that I speak to you* (Numbers 22:35). And if you say, *Elohim said to Balaam* (ibid., 12)—I have learned as follows: These instances of *Elohim* here all refer to an angel, and that one is a place coming from the side of harsh Judgment, to which are linked the power and potency of those lower crowns, which Balaam wielded. Therefore, *Elohim came to Balaam* (ibid., 9); *Elohim said to Balaam*, for sometimes angels are called by a supernal name.[546]

“*The jenny swerved from the way* (Numbers 22:23)—she turned aside from that ‘way’ with which she was burdened, from the side of harsh Judgment against Israel. How did Balaam see that she had turned aside from that way? Well, Rabbi Shim’on said as follows: ‘Even on the way, he sought to harm Israel by the power of his jenny. When he did not succeed, what is written? *Balaam struck the jenny with the rod* (Numbers 22:27)—burdening her and clothing her with armaments of harsh, stern Judgment. As is written: *with the rod*, precisely, which is harsh, stern Judgment; it is not written *with his rod*, but rather *with the rod*.[547]

“Go and see how mighty was the wisdom of that wicked one and his craving to harm Israel, for he sought to leave the authority above, due to his desire to glorify himself and afflict Israel![548]

“*But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of the vineyards, a fence on one side and a fence on the other* (Numbers 22:24). What is written above? First is written *The jenny swerved from the way and went into the field—and went* on a straight way from the side of *the field*. She was aroused and emptied of what was in her.[549]

“*And Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the way* (ibid.)—to divert her from that way of *the field*.”[550]

Rabbi Yose said, “Between the angel and Balaam, that jenny was in great distress. Afterward, when Balaam saw that he could not succeed, then *he struck the jenny with the rod* (Numbers 22:27), as has been said.”[551]

But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of the vineyards. Rabbi Abba said, “How carefully should we contemplate the words of Torah! These verses allude [209a] to supernal wisdom. Now, was it for nothing that this angel went forth to appear to one jenny—or to stand between vineyards confronting her, one time here, another time there? Rather, all is a sublime mystery, and all was intended by the blessed Holy One to protect Israel, so that evil species would not dominate them—since they are the share of the blessed Holy One.[552]

“*But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of the vineyards*. It has been taught: From the aspect of Mother, as She is being crowned, there emerge in Her crowns 1,500 facets carved in Her ornaments. When She desires to couple with the King, She is crowned with a crown of four colors. Those colors flash in the four directions of the world, each color flashing three times in its direction, making twelve engraved boundaries, entering and included in twelve others.[553]

“On the top of the crown are four walls in four directions—and they are *towers*, as is said: *towers of perfumes* (Song of Songs 5:13). What is meant by *perfumes*? As is written: *with all the merchant’s powders* (ibid. 3:6). On each and every tower, three openings framed in precious stones on every single side.[554]

“This crown scintillates with leaps of Ophir for the glory of the King, as is written: *I will make people precious with pure gold, and a human with gold of Ophir* (Isaiah 13:12).[555]

“Beneath the crown hang two hundred bells of gold all around, a golden bell on this side and a golden bell on that, and one pomegranate within. Inside that pomegranate are a thousand bells, each one flashing red and white. That pomegranate is divided into four segments, and remains open so that its bells may be seen.[556]

“Three hundred and twenty-five bells on this side, and so on every side, until the four directions of the world glow from the display of every slice. They are called *a slice of pomegranate*, as is written: *Like a slice of pomegranate is your cheek* (Song of Songs 4:3).[557]

“Four wheels on the slices; four corners carry that crown, revolving. As they carry it, they are elevated above, until reaching the whirl of the supernal slice, roaring day and night. All those slices join, and carry the crown, elevating it.[558]

“The sound of those wheels is heard through all the heavens, and at its sweetness all celestial powers become excited, all asking one another, until all of them say, *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His place!* (Ezekiel 3:12).[559]

“When the King couples with *Matronita*, this crown ascends and settles on *Matronita*’s head. Then a lofty crown descends, studded with all precious stones, surrounded by calyx and blossom. With six wheels it comes to the six directions of the world, carried on its slices by six wings of eagles. Fifty apertures around it, carved into it by Supernal Mother, set with precious stones: white, red, green, and black; blue and purple—613 sparkles in every direction.[560]

“One thousand six hundred towers on every side—and from every single tower, arranged rows soar above, imbibing at the table of Supernal Mother, from Her anointing oil. Then Mother silently conveys from there noble gifts, sending and setting them into that crown. Afterward, streams of holy anointing oil are drawn upon the head of the King, and from His head that fine celestial oil descends onto His glorious beard, flowing from there over

those royal garments, as is written: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard*… (Psalms 133:2).[561]

"Afterward the crown returns and Supernal Mother crowns Him with that crown, and spreads over Him and over *Matronita* a garment of splendor with that crown. Then a voice is heard throughout all worlds: *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon, upon the crown* [*with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of his heart's delight*] (Song of Songs 3:11). Then, there is joy among all the King's children. Who are these? All those deriving from the side of Israel. For the only ones joining with them and remaining with them are the people of Israel, who are members of the household, attending to them.[562]

"So, blessings issuing from them belong to Israel. They obtain all, sending some of it to the other nations, and from that portion all those other nations are nourished.[563]

"It has been taught: Between the sides of the portions of those appointed over other nations issues [209b] one narrow path, from which flows a portion to those below, from there dividing in many directions. This we call 'drippings,' issuing from the side of the Holy Land, and so the whole world drinks from the drippings of the land of Israel.[564]

"Who is the land of Israel? This we have already established. And whether above or below, all those other nations are nourished only by those drippings. Do not say that these are alone; rather, even those lower crowns drink from those drippings. This is *the narrow path of the vineyards* (Numbers 22:24)—a path of the princes of other nations, from which they are blessed.[565]

"When that angel saw that Balaam was diverting the jenny to that path—as is written: *to steer her back to the way* (Numbers 22:23)—immediately, *the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of the vineyards* (ibid., 24): to block the

path, so that those other nations and those lower crowns would not be aided by it.[566]

"This accords with what Rabbi Yitsḥak said: 'It is written, *They made me keeper of the vineyards* (Song of Songs 1:6)—to keep and bless the other nations during exile. Whereas the people of Israel, who are *my own vineyard, I did not keep* (ibid.)—for they are in exile and not blessed fittingly.'"[567]

A fence on one side and a fence on the other (Numbers 22:24). Rabbi Abba said, "How could the angel block that path? Because he had other assistance—the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel."[568]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Torah assisted him, as is written: *on one side and on the other they were written* (Exodus 32:15).[569]

"At that moment, what is written? *The jenny saw the angel of YHVH and pressed herself against the wall* (Numbers 22:25). What is meant by *pressed herself against* הקיר (*ha-qir*), *the wall*? As is said: מקרקר קיר (*meqarqar qir*), *Kir shrieked, in the Valley of Vision, and Shoa on the hill* (Isaiah 22:5). *Qir*—a patron, the one reigning over them. *Pressing Balaam's leg against the wall* (Numbers, ibid.)—she gave him no help at all; in her distress, she threw him against that *qir, wall*, hinting this to him. Then, *and once more he struck her* (ibid.) on this side.[570]

"*The angel of YHVH once more crossed over, standing in a narrow place where there was no room to turn right or left* (Numbers 22:26). At that moment, he blocked all paths and all assistance for her, so that no assistance would be available to her from any direction in the world. Then, *she crouched down under Balaam, and Balaam's wrath flared* [*and he struck the jenny with the rod*] (ibid., 27).[571]

"*YHVH opened the jenny's mouth* (Numbers 22:28). This is one of those things created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight."[572]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “What was so great for Balaam or for the jenny or for Israel in these words?”[573]

Rabbi Yose replied, “That those chieftains with him laughed at him. And when they reached Balak, they said to him, ‘Did you send for this fool to honor him? You will find no substance in him or in his words—and by those words of his jenny he was disgraced.’”[574]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “If the jenny had not said this, Balaam would not have abandoned that plan of his; by the jenny’s words, he knew that his power was broken.”[575]

Rabbi Abba raised a contradiction: “It is written: *The earth opened her mouth* (Numbers 16:32), and it is written *YHVH opened the jenny’s mouth*. Why is *the earth* different than *the jenny*, since of the former it is not written *YHVH opened the earth’s mouth*? Well, there, Moses issued a decree upon the mouth—and the earth opened, performing Moses’ command; and it was not fitting for the blessed Holy One to fulfill his command, since Moses had decreed and commanded: *and the ground opens her mouth* (ibid., 30). Consequently, she performed his command, as is written: *The earth opened her mouth*. But here, there was no one who decreed; rather it was the will of the blessed Holy One. And since this was His wish, it is written *YHVH opened the jenny’s mouth*—from Him derived the act, from Him it came into being.”[576]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “I have examined this passage and these words, and it seems that they are unnecessary. Since it is written *YHVH opened the jenny’s mouth*, those words should be sublime words, words of wisdom. And if it is as the Companions have educed—that he prided himself on having a horse grazing in the moist meadow, and she retorted, *‘Am I not your jenny?* (Numbers 22:30)—then she should have opened here, yet she opened only with *What have I done to you?* (ibid., 28). If so, why did the blessed Holy One bother to open her mouth?”[577]

Rabbi Abba said, “Surely through these words we learn the mind of Balaam, who was not worthy for the Holy Spirit to settle upon him. And we learn that his jenny was incapable of doing evil or [210a] good. And we learn from this jenny that animals are incapable of being endowed with a complete mind.[578]

“Come and see: Balaam could not comprehend the words of his jenny or that stupid mind; the supernal mind, how much more so![579]

“*She said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you, that you’ve struck me?’* (Numbers 22:28). Now, was it within her power to do good or evil? No, for animals behave only as they are conducted. And even though that jenny was in extreme depths, she was not under her own control; for he had loaded her with his sorceries and she was subject to his control.[580]

“*Balaam said to the jenny, ‘Because you have toyed with me’* (Numbers 22:29). He should have laughed at her, but he responded with a stupidity matching hers. Then they laughed at him, and he became contemptible in their eyes and they knew he was a fool. What did he say? *Because you have toyed with me. If only I had a sword in my hand!* They said, ‘This fool! If he can destroy nations with his mouth, why can’t he destroy his jenny without needing a sword?’[581]

“And we learn that animals are incapable of being endowed with another spirit. For if people say, ‘If only animals could speak, how much perfect knowledge they would bring forth to the world!’—then go and learn from this jenny. For the blessed Holy One opened her mouth, and look at her words!”[582]

It happened in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-Baal, and he

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Balak was more skilled in sorcery than Balaam, except that he could not determine the

saw from there the edge of the people (Numbers 22:41).

precise moment to curse. 'A parable,' and so on. Therefore, *Balak took Balaam*—he arranged things for him and held fast to him entirely.[583]

"*And brought him up to Bamoth-Baal*. What is meant by this? Well, through his sorcery he examined by which aspect he could grasp them, and he discovered that Israel was destined to build [idolatrous] cult sites and to worship Baal, as is written: *They went after Baal*.[584]

"*And he saw from there the edge of the people*—he saw the notables of the people and their king worshiping him, as is written: *They called in the name of Baal* (1 Kings 18:26), and similarly, *If YHVH is God, go follow him, and if Baal, follow him* (ibid., 21). As soon as Balaam saw that Israel was destined for this, immediately *Balaam said to Balak, 'Build me here seven* מזבחות (*mizbeḥot*), *altars*, (Numbers 23:1)—מזבחת (*mizbeḥot*), spelled deficiently.[585]

"Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Yehudah [differed on this]. One said, 'Corresponding to the altars of the ancients he offered on those seven altars.' The other said, 'In wisdom he did all, and he perceived that Israel's share is tied to seven rungs. Therefore he arranged seven altars.'[586]

"This may be compared to a man who had a close friend who was left to him by his father, and on account of that friend people were afraid to quarrel with him. Sometime later, another man came and wanted to meddle with him. He thought, 'What should I do? If I provoke a quarrel with him, here is that friend who is bound to him, so I cannot prevail.' What did he do? He sent a gift to that friend. The friend thought, 'What does that person have to do with me?' He realized that it was because of that son of his friend. He said, 'This gift is unacceptable to me; provide it to the dogs and let them eat it.'[587]

"Similarly, Balaam came to provoke a quarrel with Israel and saw that he could not prevail because of that

supernal Friend of theirs—as is said: *Do not forsake your friend or your father's friend* (Proverbs 27:10). He began preparing a gift for Him. The blessed Holy One said, 'Wicked one, what do you have to do with Me? You want to attack My children! Here is your gift, ready for the dogs!'[588]

"Come and see what is written: ויקר אלהים (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon, Balaam* (Numbers 23:4); and Rabbi Shim'on said, 'Expressing קרי (*qeri*), a polluting mishap, and impurity—let your gift be handed over to these; it will not enter My presence.'"[589]

Rabbi Abba said, "ויקר (*Va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*—as is said: *In the face of* קרתו (*qarato*), *His cold, who can stand?* (Psalms 147:17). He was determined that by that gift he could prevail against Israel. What is written? *Va-yiqqar Elohim, God happened upon*—קריר גרמיה (*qareir garmeih*), He cast a cold eye, on what [Balaam] was planning.[590]

"*Va-yiqqar Elohim*—as has been said, that [*Elohim*] was aroused upon him from the impure side."[591]

Rabbi El'azar said, "*Va-yiqqar, happened upon*—Balaam thought that by that gift he could enter to harm Israel; but the blessed Holy One אעקר (*a'qar*), eradicated, that gift from His presence; *a'qar*, detached, Balaam from what he had been thinking; and eradicated him from that rung. As is written: ויקר (*va-yiqqar*)—as is said: *The ravens of the brook* יקרוה (*yiqruha*), *will peck it out* (Proverbs 30:17). He said to him, 'Wicked one, you are not worthy of being linked with Me [210b] or entering My presence. Your gift will be handed over to the dogs!'"[592]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Come and see this wicked one, loathsome of all, for you will not find in this entire portion *YHVH said to Balaam* or *YHVH spoke to Balaam*. Perish the thought! What is written? *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth* (Numbers 23:5)—like someone putting a bridle bit in a donkey's mouth so that it won't deviate this way or that; so, too, *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth*.[593]

“The blessed Holy One said, ‘Wicked one, do you think that it depends on you for the blessing of My children to come about and be fulfilled—or the opposite? They do not need you!’ As they say to a wasp: ‘Not of your honey and not of your sting.’ ‘Rather, *return to Balak* וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak* (Numbers 23:5). When you open your mouth, it will not be in your control, and the speaking does not depend on your mouth; rather, *ve-khoh tedabber, and Koh shall speak*. Here is *Koh*, ready to bless them; Koh will utter the blessings of My children! When you open your mouth, She will speak words to be fulfilled for My children; for I will not leave words for you.’[594]

“Come and see that it was so. Once he came to Balak, and Balak heard all those words, he thought that they issued from Balaam’s mouth. He said, *I took you to curse my enemies, and instead you have offered blessings* (Numbers 23:11).[595]

“Balaam said to him, ‘Take these implements of sorcery in your hand, in order to restrain this *Koh*. If you can restrain Her with this sorcery, I will uproot Her from those words that She has spoken.’[596]

“What is written? התיצב כה (*Hityatsev koh*), *Stabilize Koh, by your ascent offering* (Numbers 23:15)—by this and by this your sorcery restrain Her, ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (ibid.)—אעקר (*e’qar*), I will uproot, Her from these words.[597]

“The blessed Holy One said, ‘Wicked one, I will uproot you!’ What is written afterward? ויקר אלהים (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon, Balaam and put a word in his mouth* (Numbers 23:16). That word was amplified by the utterance of *Koh: and said, ‘Return to Balak*, וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak’* (ibid.)—*Koh tedabber, Koh shall speak*, surely![598]

“Come and see: At first it is not written התיצב כה (*Hityatsev koh*), *Station yourself here, by your ascent offering*, but rather התיצב (*Hityatsev*), *Station yourself, by your ascent*

offering, while I move about. Perhaps YHVH will happen upon me (Numbers 23:3). Once he saw that *Koh* uttered those blessings, he said, התיצב כה (*Hityatsev koh*), *Stabilize Koh, by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder* (ibid., 15)."[599]

Go, curse me Jacob, and go doom Israel (Numbers 23:7). *Go*, ארה (*arah*), *curse, me* [*Jacob*]. Rabbi Yose said, "Cast them down from that rung they occupy, as is said: *to the side of it* אורה (*oreh*), *I will shoot* (1 Samuel 20:20). [Balak] said, 'If you can cast down that rung of theirs, then all of them will be uprooted from the world.'[600]

"*And go*, זועמה (*zo'amah*), *doom, Israel* (Numbers 23:7)—Israel the Elder, above, so that wrath will appear before Him, as is said: *God* זועם (*zo'em*), *rages, every day* (Psalms 7:12)."[601]

When מראש צורים (*me-rosh tsurim*), *from the cliff tops, I see him, and from hills I gaze upon him* (Numbers 23:9). צורים (*Tsurim*), *Cliff tops*. Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "These are the patriarchs, as is written: *Look to* צור (*tsur*), *the rock, from which you were hewn* (Isaiah 51:1). *And from hills I gaze upon him*—the matriarchs. Whether from this side or from that, they cannot be cursed."[602]

Rabbi Abba said, "*When* מראש צורים (*me-rosh tsurim*), *from the cliff tops*—Who can prevail over Israel? For they are connected to רישא (*reisha*), the head, from which all צורים (*tsurim*), *cliffs*, emerge. Who are the *cliffs*? *Gevuran* (Powers), for all judgments of the world issue from those *Gevuran*, to which [the people of Israel] are linked.[603]

"*And from hills I gaze upon him*—other camps to which they are linked.[604]

"Alternatively, *and from hills*—other crowns to which they are connected.[605]

"*Look, a people that dwells alone* (Numbers 23:9)—as is said: *YHVH alone did lead him, no alien god by His side* (Deuteronomy 32:12)."[606]

Who has counted the dust of Jacob [*or numbered the seed of Israel*]? (Numbers 23:10). This has already been established, but Rabbi Yose said, "There are two rungs: Jacob and Israel. At first Jacob, and afterward Israel. Although all is one, there are two rungs here, for the higher rung is Israel. *Who has counted the dust of Jacob?*—below."[607]

Who is *dust*? Rabbi Shim'on said, "The one of whom is written *He makes his sword like dust* (Isaiah 41:2). Who is *his sword*? This is well known, as is written: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood* (ibid. 34:6). *Dust*—the place from which Adam was created, as is written: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth* (Genesis 2:7). From that *dust* issued many cohorts, many camps. Many fiery embers, many wardens of judgment, many arrows, many catapults, many lances, swords, and weapons came into being from that *dust. Who has counted?*—as is said: *Is there a number to His troops?* (Job 25:3).[608]

"*Or numbered* רובע (*rova*), *a fourth of, Israel* (Numbers 23:10)—this is ה (*he*), and it is one matter.[609]

"*Rova of Israel*—as is said: רובץ (*rovets*), *lying, under its load* (Exodus 23:5); רביע (*revi'a*), lying. As is written: *Here is the bed of Solomon!* (Song of Songs 3:7).[610]

"*Rova, A fourth*—like רביעית (*revi'it*), fourth, from Israel down; it is called *rova, fourth*, according to crowns, implying that it is the fourth leg of the Throne.[611]

"Alternatively, *Who has counted the dust of Jacob?*—all those who are considered as dust, as we have established.[612]

"*Or numbered a fourth of Israel*—as is written: *Is there a number to His troops? Rova, A fourth of, Israel*—as [211a] we have established.[613]

"Alternatively, *Who has counted the dust of Jacob?*—those commandments pertaining to the dust: to sowing, planting, and harvesting, as the Companions have already established.[614]

“*Or numbered* רובע (*rova*), *the seed of, Israel*—as is said: *Your cattle* לא תרביע (*lo tarbi’a*), *you shall not mate, with a different kind*… (Leviticus 19:19).”[615]

Rabbi Abba said, “Balak was more skilled in sorcery than Balaam, except that he did not know how to determine the precise moment to curse.”[616]

ויישא משלו ויאמר (*Va-yissa meshalo va-yomar*), *He took up his verse and he said* (Numbers 23:7). It is not written וידבר (*va-ydabber*), *and he spoke*.[617]

What is meant by ויישא משלו (*va-yissa meshalo*), *he raised his verse?* Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “He raised his voice toward that Speaker. *He raised his verse*—Balaam. *And he said*—this *Koh*, as is written: וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and Koh shall speak* (Numbers 23:5), so the utterance came from Her.[618]

“Come and see: When Balaam saw that even with all his sorcery and this whole gift he was unable to uproot that *Koh* —as is said ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I will be happened upon yonder* (Numbers 23:15): אעקר להאי כה (*e’qar le-hai koh*), ‘I will uproot this *Koh*’—the blessed Holy One said to him, ‘Wicked one, you are intending to uproot Her? *E’qar*, I will detach, you from your chain!’ What is written? אלהים ויקר (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon, Balaam* (ibid., 16), as has been said.[619]

“Afterward, when he saw that he could not succeed, he went on to say, *He blessed*, ולא אשיבנה (*ve-lo ashivennah*), *so I will not reverse her* (Numbers 23:20). The verse should read ולא אשיבנו (*ve-lo ashivennu*), *so I will not reverse it*. However, *ve-lo ashivennah, so I will not reverse her*, surely!—referring to the one of whom is written כה (*koh*): וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and Koh shall speak*. ‘I cannot reverse Her.’[620]

“Balaam said, ‘By two rungs I sought to gain entry into them. I tried from the rung of Jacob, and I did not succeed. I tried to gain entry from the other aspect—of Israel—and I did not succeed.’ Why so? Because neither this name nor that is linked with evil species, as is written: *He has beheld*

no iniquity in Jacob, and has seen no mischief in Israel (Numbers 23:21).[621]

"It has been taught: There are two rungs, as has been said: נחש (*naḥash*), *sorcery*, and קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry*. Corresponding to them: עמל (*amal*), *mischief*, and און (*aven*), *iniquity*. Balaam said, 'We have surely found the counterparts of Jacob and Israel: *aven* (*iniquity*) corresponding to Jacob, who is linked with *naḥash* (*sorcery*); *amal* (*mischief*) corresponding to Israel, who is linked with *qesem* (*wizardry*).' Once he saw that he could not succeed, he said, 'Surely, *He has beheld no aven, iniquity, in Jacob, and has seen no amal, mischief, in Israel*. Why? Because *YHVH his God is with him*… (Numbers 23:21).'[622]

"If you say [that Balaam reasoned:] 'With these I cannot prevail, but with *qesem* (*wizardry*) and *naḥash* (*sorcery*) I can,' it is written: *Surely there is no naḥash, sorcery, in Jacob, no qesem, wizardry, in Israel* (Numbers 23:23).[623]

"Furthermore, all the cohorts above and all the camps neither know nor contemplate the decrees of the supernal King until they ask these two: Jacob and Israel. What do they say? *What does God plan to do?* (ibid.)."[624]

Rabbi El'azar said, "All these words were said by *Koh*, and [Balaam] lifted his voice toward Her and did not know who She was, and nothing was heard [of him] but his [inarticulate] voice.[625]

"*Look, a people arises like a lion, rears up like the king of beasts* (Numbers 23:24). What people is as mighty as Israel? As morning begins to shine, he rises and grows mighty as a lion for the service of his Lord, with many songs, with many praises. They engage in Torah all day. In the evening, *he will not lie down till he devours the prey* (ibid.)—when a person wants to lie down in bed, he sanctifies the supernal Name, proclaiming Him King above and below. Many wardens of judgment are bound before them when they open their mouths on their beds with *Hear,*

O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one (Deuteronomy 6:4) and seek compassion from the Holy King with various verses of compassion."[626]

Rabbi Abba said, "*Look, a people arises like a lion*. This people is destined to overwhelm all other nations like a mighty lion, hurling itself on them. The way of all lions is to lie down on their prey, but this nation *will not lie down till he devours the prey*....

"Alternatively, *Look, a people arises like a lion*—to bring sacrifices and ascent offerings before their King on the altar. It has been taught: As the sacrifice was being burnt on the altar, they would see the image of a lion crouching over that sacrifice and eating it."[627]

And Rabbi Abba said, "It was an image of the celestial angel אוריאל (*Uri'el*), Uriel, and they saw him in the form of a mighty אריה (*aryeh*), lion, crouching over the altar and eating those sacrifices. And when the people of Israel was not so worthy, they would see the image of an impudent dog crouching on it. Then Israel would know that they needed *teshuvah* and they would engage in it.[628]

"*He will not lie down till he devours the prey*—offerings of the night, such as ascent offerings. *And blood of the slain he drinks* (Numbers 23:24)—for the blessed Holy One wages war for them against their enemies."[629]

Rabbi El'azar said, "*He will not lie down*—what is meant by this? Well, every single night—when a person follows the commandments of his Lord—he does not [211b] lie down upon his bed before having slain 1,125 of those evil species haunting him."[630]

Rabbi Abba said, "They are a thousand, for they are from the left side, as is written: *A thousand will fall at your side* (Psalms 91:7). How? As is written: *Let the devout delight in glory, sing for joy on their couches... to wreak vengeance upon the nations*... (ibid. 149:5–7)—as is written: *He will not lie down till he devours the prey*—and this is: *to*

exact from them justice as written; it is grandeur for all His devoted ones. Hallelujah (ibid., 9).”[631]

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah said, “Corresponding to the three times that he struck his jenny, loading her with his sorceries, Israel was blessed three times.”[632]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Corresponding to the three times that Israel makes pilgrimage to appear in the presence of the Holy King.”[633]

Balaam saw that it was good in the eyes of YHVH to bless Israel, and he did not go, as time after time, to encounter נחשים (*neḥashim*), *omens* (Numbers 24:1). What is meant by *neḥashim, omens*?[634]

Rabbi Yose said, “Because those first two times, he went with all his sorceries, seeking to curse Israel. As soon as the blessed Holy One saw his intention, He said, ‘*Return to Balak*, for My children have no need of your utterances. Another is ready. What is that? As is written: וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak* (Numbers 23:5)—*Koh tedabber, Koh shall speak*, and not you! *Koh shall speak*, for She rules over all sorcery, wizardry, and evil species, preventing them from harming My children.’[635]

“Come and see: When this wicked one gazed at Israel, he would gaze at these two rungs—Jacob and Israel—to harm either one of them with his sorceries. Consequently, all blessings were bestowed upon Jacob and Israel.[636]

“*Balaam saw that it was good* [*in the eyes of YHVH to bless Israel*]. How did he see? He saw that when the face of the King shines, evil species do not endure abidingly, and all sorceries and wizardry fail in their magic.

“Come and see: At these two times it is written: אלהים ויקר (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon*, [*Balaam*] (Numbers 23:4); יהוה ויקר (*va-yiqqar YHVH*), *YHVH happened upon, Balaam* (ibid., 16); and it is written: וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and Koh shall speak* (ibid.). Now, having seen that wrath was

nowhere to be found and that his sorceries had failed, then, *he did not go, as time after time, to encounter omens*. As soon as he separated and removed himself from his sorcery, he began with another spirit—another arousal—to praise Israel."[637]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "What is the arousal here?"[638]

He replied, "*The spirit of Elohim*, and not *the spirit of YHVH*. Rather, a certain spirit from the left side—the one underneath whom are attached those species and sorceries of his."[639]

Rabbi El'azar said, "I have learned that even upon this the Holy Spirit did not settle."[640]

Rabbi Yose said to him, "If so, look at what is written: *and the spirit of Elohim was upon him* (Numbers 24:2)—which is not stated all those other times!"[641]

He replied, "Certainly so! Come and see: It is written *He that has a good eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed* (Proverbs 22:9), and as they have already established: 'Do not read *yevorakh, will be blessed*, but rather יְבָרֵךְ (*yevarekh*), *will bless*.' And Balaam was evil-eyed—more so than anyone else in the world, for wherever he gazed with his eyes became cursed.[642]

"Regarding this they have said, 'If someone is taking his son through the marketplace and is afraid of the evil eye, he should cover his head with a scarf, so that the evil eye cannot overpower him.' Here, too, once Balaam saw that he was unable with his sorcery and wizardry to harm Israel, he sought to gaze on them with the evil eye, since everywhere that he gazed with the evil eye became cursed.[643]

"Come and see what he intended against Israel. It is written: *but he turned his face toward the desert* (Numbers 24:1)—according to its translation, so that he would have an assisting flank to harm them.[644]

"Now see what is written: *Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel* (Numbers 24:2). At that moment, if the blessed Holy One had not provided a remedy in advance, he would

have annihilated them with the gaze of his eyes. What remedy did the blessed Holy One offer Israel at that moment? As is written: *and the spirit of God was upon him* (ibid.). *Was upon him*—that is, upon Israel; like someone spreading a scarf over the head of a child, so that [demonic] eyes will not overpower him. Then he began to say, *How goodly your tents, O Jacob…!* (ibid., 5).[645]

"And come and see: Whoever wants to gaze with the evil eye cannot do so except when he praises and glorifies the thing that he wants to be cursed by the evil eye. What is his way? He says, 'See how fine this is; how lovely this is!'—so that the evil eye will overpower it. Here, too, he said, '*How goodly your tents, O Jacob!* How lovely they are, how [212a] beautiful they are! See how many fine saplings are planted among them, resembling those saplings planted by the blessed Holy One in the Garden of Eden! Would that those saplings arise from the poor among them!'[646]

"יזל מים מדליו (*Yizzal mayim mi-dalyav*), *Water will drip from his boughs* (Numbers 24:7). This may be compared to a person who had beautiful hands, lovely to look at. A certain person with an evil eye passed by, gazed at those hands, grasped them, and began praising them, saying, 'How beautiful they are, how lovely they are! Look at those fingers, modeled on supernal beauty.' Afterward he said, 'Would that these hands be set among precious stones and in splendid garments of purple in my house that I might delight in them, and they would be stored in my chest!'

"Similarly, Balaam began to praise: '*How goodly your tents, O Jacob!* See how beautiful, how lovely,' and so on. Afterward, '*Yizzal mayim mi-dalyav, May water flow from his poor ones*—may this beautiful sapling, a sapling of Torah, arise only from the poor. *And his seed be in abundant waters* (Numbers 24:7)—so that the Holy Spirit may not grow or increase.'[647]

"[The blessed Holy One] said, 'Wicked one, your eyes can do no harm! Look, a spread of holiness is over them.'

“Then he said, *El, who brings him out of Egypt—like the wild ox’s antlers for him* (Numbers 24:8). Surely none of the world’s inhabitants can harm them, for mighty supreme power grasps them. What is that? *El, who brings him out of Egypt*. Not only that, but *like the wild ox’s antlers for him*—for no person can extend his hand over him due to his height. And being situated at such a lofty elevation, *he consumes nations, his foes* (ibid.), and there is no one who can harm them.[648]

“Even at a time when he is not elevated, they cannot prevail against him, as is written: *He crouches, lies down* (Numbers 24:9); yet he does not fear, for he is mighty *like a lion, like the king of beasts* (ibid.). Even when they are among the nations, and *he crouches* among them and *lies down*, he is *like a lion* in laws of Torah, in ways of Torah. Still, they have dominion through their Lord, which even all the rulers of the world cannot eradicate—like a lion crouching on his prey, who cannot be roused from it, as is written: *He crouches, lies down like a lion, like the king of beasts—who can rouse him*?”[649]

Rabbi El’azar said, “In the whole world there was no one as skilled in inflicting harm as Balaam. For at first he was in Egypt, and through him the Egyptians bound Israel in bonds so that they could never escape their slavery. This is why he said, ‘How can I possibly harm them? For I myself prevented them from ever escaping Egyptian slavery, yet *El brought him out of Egypt*, and no wise men or sorcerers of the world can prevail against them.’”[650]

Now, I am about to go to my people. Let me counsel you what this people will do to your people in days to come (Numbers 24:14).[651]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*You shall not hand over to his master a slave who escapes to you from his master. With you he shall stay, in your midst…*

(Deuteronomy 23:16–17). How precious are the words of Torah! How precious is the Torah in the eyes of the blessed Holy One! How precious is the Torah that He bestowed upon the Assembly of Israel![652]

"Come and see: When Israel left Egypt, Balaam heard that his sorcery and wizardry had not succeeded against Israel, and he began to pluck out the hair of his head. He went to those Mountains of Darkness and reached those iron chains.[653]

"Such is the way of one who reaches them. As soon as a person enters between the mountaintops, Aza'el—the one called *eyes uncovered* (Numbers 24:4)—sees him and immediately tells Uzza. Then they give a shout, and huge fiery serpents gather to them, surrounding them. They send toward the person a little black creature. And it has been taught: It is like a cat, with a head like a snake's head, and it has two tails and tiny hands and feet. When the person sees it, he covers his face and brings ashes from the burning of a white rooster and throws them in its face, and it accompanies him until he reaches the top of the chains. That top of the chains is stuck in the ground, extending down to the abyss; and there in the abyss is one base, embedded in the lower abyss, to which the top of the chains is attached.[654]

"When the person reaches the chain, he strikes it three times, and they call to him. Then he falls on his knees and crawls, with his eyes closed, until he reaches them. He then sits before them, with all those serpents surrounding him on every side. Opening his eyes, he sees them; trembling, he falls on his face and prostrates himself before them.[655]

"Afterward, they teach him sorcery and wizardry, and he stays with them [212b] fifty days. When the time comes for him to go on his way, that black creature and all those serpents proceed before him until he emerges from the mountains amidst that dense darkness.

“When Balaam reached them, he told them what had happened, and isolated himself in the mountains with them. He sought to denounce [Israel] so as to return them to Egypt, but the blessed Holy One confounded and ruined all the wisdom and sorceries of the world so that they could not approach them.[656]

“Come and see: Now, when Balaam saw that he could not harm Israel, he changed his approach and offered Balak advice without being asked, in order to harm them. His advice was regarding those Midianite females, who were beautiful; and if Moses had not mentioned it, we would not know—as is written: *Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam’s word, led the Children of Israel* [*to betray* YHVH]… (Numbers 31:16).[657]

“As soon as the blessed Holy One observed his advice, He said, ‘Surely, by your own plot you yourself will fall.’[658]

“What did that power ruling over all his sorcery do? It showed him the end of all.”[659]

Now, do they have permission to see into the distant future? Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “The eye saw, while the words were spoken by the one standing above him, as has already been established: *He took up his verse*—Balaam—*and he said* (Numbers 23:7)—the one who should say. Why? So that disgusting words would not exist amid sublime knowledge in the Torah.[660]

“I see him, but not now. I gaze on him, but not soon (Numbers 24:17)—for some of these things were fulfilled at that time and some of them afterward, and some are for the time of King Messiah.[661]

“It has been taught: In the future the blessed Holy One will fashion and display a fixed star flashing with seventy streamers and seventy jets flaring from it in the middle of the sky. Seventy other stars will be absorbed by it, and it will shine and glow for seventy days.[662]

“On the sixth day it will appear—on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month—and it will disappear on the seventh day at the end of seventy days. On the first day it will appear in the city of Rome, and on that day three high walls of the city will fall, a magnificent palace will collapse, and the city’s ruler will die.[663]

“Then that star will expand, becoming visible throughout the world, and at that time fierce wars will erupt in the world in all four directions, with no trust to be found among them.[664]

“In the middle of the world—as that star shines in the middle of the sky—a certain great king and ruler will arise in the world, his spirit exalted over all kings, and he will provoke wars on two sides and overpower them.

“On the day when the star is concealed, the Holy Land will tremble forty-five miles around the site where the Temple stood, and an underground cave will be uncovered. From that cave will issue a mighty fire to burn the world; and from that cave will spread a grand, lofty branch that will rule over the whole world and to which will be given dominion, and to which holy ones of the Most High will gather.[665]

“Then King Messiah will be revealed throughout the world, and when he is revealed, inhabitants of the world will suffer one calamity after another, and the enemies of Israel will prevail. Then the spirit of the Messiah will be aroused against them and destroy the wicked Edom and consume in fire the whole land of Seir. Of then is written *but Israel performs valiantly* (Numbers 24:18). As is written: *Edom will be dispossessed, Seir dispossessed by its enemies* (ibid.)—the enemies of Israel—and then, *but Israel performs valiantly*.[666]

“At that time the blessed Holy One will raise the dead of His people, and death will be forgotten by them, as is written: *The right hand of YHVH performs valiantly. I shall not die but live and recount the deeds of Yah* (Psalms 118:16–

17). And then, *YHVH will be king over all the earth*… (Zechariah 14:9).”[667]

Rabbi Abba said, “Why is it written *Indeed, you shall leave with joy and be led in peace* (Isaiah 55:12)? What is meant by *you shall leave with joy*? Well, when Israel comes forth from exile, *Shekhinah* will come forth with them and they with Her—as is written: *Indeed, you shall leave with joy*.[668]

“*And* [*be led*] *in peace*—this is *jubilation*, the blessed Holy One.”[669]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “This is Righteous One, as is written: *Jubilation and joy will abide in her*… (Isaiah 51:3).”[670]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Righteous One is called *jubilation*. From the day that Assembly of Israel fell into exile, blessings have been prevented from descending to the world from that Righteous One. At that time, what is written? *You shall draw waters with jubilation*—Righteous One. *From the fountains of salvation* (Isaiah 12:3)—Father and Mother.[671]

“Alternatively, *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. And all from deep flowing springs. Then, *On that day, you will say: ‘I give thanks to You, O YHVH! Although You were angry with me*, [*Your anger has turned back and You comfort me*] (Isaiah 12:1). And it is written: *Shout for joy, you who dwell in Zion!* [*For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel*] (ibid., 6).”[672]

פרשת פינחס

Parashat Pineḥas

“PHINEHAS” (NUMBERS 25:10–30:1)

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*Hear, my son, the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother* (Proverbs 1:8). *Hear, my son, the instruction of your father*—the blessed Holy One. *And do not forsake the teaching of your mother*—Assembly of Israel. What is meant by מוסר (*musar*), *the instruction of, your father? Musar* is Torah, which contains many reproofs, many punishments, as is said: *YHVH’s musar, discipline, my son, do not spurn, and do not despise His reproof* (ibid. 3:11).[1]

“Consequently, whoever engages in Torah in this world becomes worthy of having many gates opened for him in that world—many lights. When he departs from this world, she precedes him, going to all the gatekeepers, proclaiming, ‘*Open the gates!* (Isaiah 26:2). Prepare the seats for so-and-so, the King’s servant!’ For the blessed Holy One has no joy other than with one who engages in Torah. All the more so, with one who awakens in the night to engage in Torah, for all the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to his voice and the blessed Holy One is present among them, as we have established: *You who dwell in the gardens, companions listen for your voice; let me hear!* (Song of Songs 8:13).”[2]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “This verse contains a mystery of wisdom. *You who dwell in the gardens*—Assembly of Israel, who is in exile along with Israel, accompanying them in their distress.[3]

"*Companions listen for your voice*—celestial camps, all of whom listen *for your voice*, the voice of Your praises in exile.[4]

"*Let me hear!*—as is said: *Let me see your form, let me hear your voice* (Song of Songs 2:14); '*Let me hear* the voice of those Companions engaging in Torah, for I have no praise such as that of those who engage in Torah.'"

Rabbi Shim'on said, "As it were, all those who succeed in engaging in Torah from when the night is split, and who accompany *Matronita* as the day dawns to welcome the King, take hold and take possession of *Shekhinah*. Furthermore, a thread of love alights upon such a person, as we have established.[5]

"Come and see: Whoever is privileged to take hold of *Shekhinah* should be on guard against those things clashing with Her. Who are they? Those who do not betray the holy insignia, for example, [by copulating with] *the daughter of an alien god* (Malachi 2:11). Whoever safeguards this, Assembly of Israel, as it were, grasps him, protects him, and welcomes him. And all the more so if he succeeds in acting zealously for this."[6]

And Rabbi Shim'on said, "Israel deserved to be destroyed at that time, but Phinehas quickly executed this deed, and wrath subsided, as is written: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath* (Numbers 25:11)."[7]

Alternatively, *Phinehas son of Eleazar* [*son of Aaron*]. Rabbi Shim'on said, "*Son of, son of*, twice, coming to restore the loss."[8]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "If a person obtains a recycled soul and fails to have it rectified within him, it is as though he falsifies the truth of the King; and I apply to him this verse: *or if he finds something lost and denies it and swears falsely* (Leviticus 5:22). *And denies it*—better for him if he had never been created![9]

“We have learned: ‘A completely righteous person is not thrust aside; an incompletely righteous person is.’ Who is completely righteous, and who is incompletely righteous? Could it be that one whose deeds are flawed is called righteous?[10]

“Well, a completely righteous person is clearly recognized, for he has not taken tortuous convolutions; and with his inheritance he builds a structure, erects walls, hews out wells, and plants trees.[11]

“An incompletely righteous person is one who builds a structure with another’s inheritance—digging into it, restoring the foundation stones as before, toiling over it; yet he does not know if it will remain his. Furthermore, regarding himself, he is considered good and righteous; but regarding that inheritance, not so.[12]

“This may be compared to a person who builds a beautiful and attractive building. But when he examines the foundation, he sees that it is sinking and distorted in all directions. The building is incomplete until he demolishes it and rebuilds it anew. Regarding his building itself, it was fine and beautiful; [213b] but regarding the foundation, it was bad and distorted. So it is not called a complete project; it is not called a complete building. Consequently, ‘an incompletely righteous person is thrust aside.’ Thus, *while the wicked swallows up the one more righteous than he* (Habakkuk 1:13).[13]

“Come and see: If one acts zealously for the name of the blessed Holy One, even though he is not worthy of greatness or deserving of it, he will surely gain and obtain it. Phinehas did not deserve it at that time, but because he acted zealously for the name of his Lord, he gained all and attained all. All was rectified within him, and he was privileged to serve in the supreme priesthood. From that moment on, *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest* —for he consummated two, since he acted zealously for the

Holy Name of his Lord, rectifying what had been contorted."[14]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, "*Protect my soul, for I am faithful. O You, my God, deliver Your servant who trusts in You* (Psalms 86:2). The end of this verse should be examined, and afterward the entire verse. The end of the verse reads: הבוטח אליך (*ha-boteaḥ elekha*), *who trusts to You*. The verse should read בך (*bekha*), *in You*; what is meant by *ha-boteaḥ elekha, who trusts to You*? Well, as it were, David אבטח ליה (*avtaḥ leih*), promised to Him, that midnight would never find him asleep, as is written: *At midnight I will rise to praise You* (Psalms 119:62). אקום (*Aqum*), *I will rise*—the verse should read קמתי (*qamti*), *I rose*; however, *aqum, I will rise*, forever and be bound to You forever.[15]

"שמרה (*Shomrah*), *Protect, my soul*—the verse should read שמור (*shemor*), *protect*. Surely we have learned that there is no letter in the Torah lacking precious supernal mysteries. *Shomrah, Protect*—to the blessed Holy One he said *shomrah*, to that portion to which *my soul* is linked. For when the soul departs from this world, she proceeds to inherit her world. If she is worthy, many cohorts emerge to greet her, to protect her and escort her to her dwelling place. This ה (*he*) protects her, to join with her on new moons and Sabbaths.[16]

"If she is not worthy, many dazzling demonic wardens confront her and thrust her outside. Woe to that soul, whirling in emptiness like a stone in the hollow of a sling, as is written: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29).[17]

"David pleaded before the blessed Holy One, saying, '*Protect my soul*, that she not be thrust outside. And when she reaches You, may the portals be opened for her, and may You welcome her.'"[18]

For I am חסיד (*ḥasid*), *devoted*. Now, was he called *ḥasid*?[19]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Yes, as is written: *the faithful* דוד חסדי (*ḥasdei david*), *acts of love for David* (Isaiah 55:3). Therefore, ‘*Protect my soul*, so that You do not abandon her to wander outside.’”[20]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Every person who has a share in the Righteous One inherits this *land*, as is written: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever* (Isaiah 60:21). And this Righteous One is called *ḥasid*. David said, ‘I am linked to the site of this one—*I am ḥasid*. So *protect my soul*, that she may be bound to You.’”[21]

Rabbi Aḥa opened, “*A testimony He placed it* ביהוסף (*bi-Yhosef*), *in Joseph, when He went forth against the land of Egypt*… (Psalms 81:6). It has already been established that [Gabriel] taught him seventy memoranda, in addition to the holy tongue, as is written: *a language I knew not, I heard* (ibid.). But what is *a testimony*?[22]

“Come and see: When Potiphar’s wife grabbed him for that act, Joseph pretended not to know her language. And so it happened every day until the final time, as is written: *She seized him by his garment* (Genesis 39:12). Why did *she seize him*? Well, because he pretended not to know her language. The Holy Spirit cried out to him, ‘*To protect you from a strange woman, from a smooth-talking alien woman* (Proverbs 7:5).’ What does this teach us? That whoever guards himself from this becomes linked with *Shekhinah* and grasps that *testimony*. What is that? The ה (*he*) that was added to him, as is written: *A testimony He placed it* ביהוסף (*bi-Yhosef*), *in Joseph*. Here, too, a י (*yod*) was linked with פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas, because he acted zealously for Her, as has already been established.”[23]

Rabbi Yeisa opened, “*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, oh we wept, when we remembered Zion* (Psalms 137:1). The verse should read *when we remembered Jerusalem*, as

is written: *If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither* (ibid., 5). Why *when we remembered Zion*?[24]

"This may be compared to a person who had a glorious and beautiful palace. Marauders came and burnt it down. Whose is the anguish, if not that of the palace's owner? Here, too, *Shekhinah* is in exile. Whose is the anguish, if not that of *Zion*?[25]

"This accords with what has been established, as is written: *The righteous one loses* (Isaiah 57:1)—*the righteous one loses*, really! Here, too, *when we remembered Zion—when we remembered* that agitation of His over [no longer] coupling with Her. The anguish is His."[26]

Rabbi Yeisa said, "Whoever honors the name of his Lord in this matter, guarding this, is privileged to be honored by his Lord over all. How do we know this? From Joseph, as is written: *He had him ride in the chariot of his viceroy* (Genesis 41:43), and it is written *setting him over all the land of Egypt* (ibid.). [214a] Furthermore, when Israel crossed the sea, Joseph's coffin entered first and the waters could not withstand it—as is written: *The sea saw and fled* (Psalms 114:3). What is meant by *and fled?* Well, it *saw* the one of whom is written *He fled and went out* (Genesis 39:12).[27]

"Come and see: He attained honor in his life, and he attained afterward in his death. Why in his life? Because of that time that he refused to cling to her, as is written: *He refused. And he said to his master's wife* (Genesis 39:8); and it is written *He would not listen to her, to lie beside her, to be with her* (ibid., 10). For this, he attained in this world. Since it is written *She seized him by his garment, saying*, [*'Lie with me!'*], and then, *he fled and went out* (ibid., 12), he attained afterward, entering through the supernal curtain. Fittingly so: he obtained his due in this world, and he obtained his due in the other world.[28]

“Phinehas attained in this world, and he attained in the world that is coming. He was privileged to exist longer than all those who came out of Egypt, and he attained the supreme priesthood—he and all his descendants after him.[29]

“Now, if you say that, in fact, he attained the priesthood before performing this deed—yes. For even those who say that he did not attain previously—not so! Rather, how do we establish *in recompense for his acting zealously for his God* (Numbers 25:13), which implies that because of this deed he gained the priesthood, which he did not possess before?[30]

“Come and see: Every priest who kills a person disqualifies himself from the priesthood forever, for he has surely rendered that rung of his defective in relation to him. So Phinehas was legally disqualified from the priesthood. But since he acted zealously for the blessed Holy One, he had to be vested with eternal priesthood—he and his descendants after him for all generations.”[31]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Come and see: Phinehas was designated above and below before issuing into the world, for he was already numbered with those who came out of Egypt.”[32]

Rabbi El’azar, Rabbi Yose, and Rabbi Ḥiyya were walking in the wilderness. Rabbi Yose said, “Regarding what is written of Phinehas: *I hereby grant him My covenant of peace* (Numbers 25:12)—*peace* from the Angel of Death, who never overpowered him nor inflicted punishments upon him. Now, if you say that he did not die—surely he did not die like other human beings, and he outlived all members of his generation, because this holy Covenant grasped him. And when he departed from the world, by celestial yearning and lovely cleaving he transcended other inhabitants of the world.”[33]

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of* YHVH*...* (Zechariah 3:1). Come and see: Woe to human beings who neither know nor perceive the glory of their Lord! Every single day, a herald proclaims over them—yet they are unaware. If a person contemplates the commandments of Torah, many advocates rise to speak on his behalf. If a person transgresses the commandments of Torah, those deeds become his accusers before the blessed Holy One. Joshua was a high priest, and they have established: What is written? *And the Accuser standing at his right to accuse him* (ibid.). Now, if it was so for him, then for other inhabitants of the world—who do not perceive the glory of their Lord—how much more so![34]

"See what is written: *Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments* (Zechariah 3:3), and this has been established. But *filthy garments* are surely those garments in which the spirit is clothed in that world. Happy is the share of one whose garments are perfectly proper in that world! As has been said, when anyone is intended to be sent to Hell, in what kind of garments is he clothed? What is written here? *Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel*. Which angel? The angel in charge of Hell and in charge of whomever he sees in those clothes. Finally, the voice spoke up and said, *Take the filthy garments off him!* (ibid., 4).[35]

"From here, one should perceive that a person's evil deeds produce for him those filthy garments. *And he said to him, 'See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in robes'* (ibid.). He was clothed in other, proper garments, in which a person may gaze upon the glorious splendor of his Lord.

"Come and see: Similarly, Phinehas did not depart from the world until other garments were prepared for him, in which the spirit could revel in the world [214b] that is coming. In a single moment, he was stripped of those and

clothed in these, fulfilling what is written: *I hereby grant him My covenant of peace*."[36]

While they were walking, the sun grew fierce, so they sat down in the shade of a certain rock in the wilderness. Rabbi El'azar said, "Surely this shade is joy of the soul!"[37]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said to Rabbi El'azar, "These days from Rosh Hashanah until the last day of the Festival, I wish to fathom."[38]

Rabbi El'azar said, "This has already been discussed, and the Companions have been aroused by them."[39]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Certainly so! But I heard something about them from the Supreme Lamp."[40]

He said to him, "Tell it to us."

He replied, "I don't yet grasp it."

Rabbi El'azar said, "Although the Companions have already established the matter, and it is fine, the sequence of these days is a mystery of wisdom among the Reapers of the Field.[41]

"Come and see: The sequence of unifying all into one, how this proceeds, has already been discussed; yes it has."[42]

He opened, saying, "*YHVH has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God* (Isaiah 52:10). *YHVH has bared His holy arm*—one arm upon which *salvation* depends, upon which vengeance depends, upon which redemption depends. And why? To raise Assembly of Israel from the dust and to welcome Her toward Him, to couple as one. When this is aroused toward Her, how much fear prevails in the world, until He lays that arm beneath Her head, to unite, as is said: *His left hand beneath my head*… (Song of Songs 2:6). Then Judgment subsides, and sins are forgiven.[43]

"Afterward, the right comes to embrace. Then joy prevails in the world, and all faces shine. Afterward, She

couples with the body; and then all is called one, inseparable. Then, consummation of all, joy of all—oneness, surely, which is not so at other times.[44]

"Similar to this, the sequence of these days from Rosh Hashanah until the last day of the Festival. On Rosh Hashanah the left arm is aroused to receive *Matronita*; and then the whole world is in fear, in judgment—and at that time the world must be in complete *teshuvah* before the blessed Holy One.[45]

"Afterward, *Matronita* comes, and on the ninth of the month the members of the palace must generate joy and immerse themselves in a river to purify themselves for the coupling of *Matronita*. On the following day is Her coupling—placing the left beneath Her head, as is said: *His left hand beneath my head*.[46]

"Then the people of Israel engage in fasting for their sins, and She forgives them, for Supernal Mother shines Her face upon *Matronita* in Her coupling—and all members of the palace are pardoned, since the left receives Her on this day and *Matronita*'s head rests on the left.[47]

"On the first day of the Festival, the right is aroused toward Her, to embrace. Then, total joy, all faces beaming—and a certain joy in clear water being poured in libation on the altar. People should rejoice in all sorts of ways, for the right proves decisive. Wherever the right prevails, there should be joy entirely—for then, blissful delight![48]

"Afterward, on the eighth day is Joy of Torah, for then, coupling of the body, coupling of all, all becoming one—this is consummation of all. This is surely Israel's day, theirs alone, with no portion for another. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world that is coming, for of them of written *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God*… (Deuteronomy 7:6)."[49]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, "*Remember, now: what innocent person ever perished, and where were the upright*

Phinehas son of Eleazar (Numbers 25:11).[50] *obliterated?* (Job 4:7). There we have learned: Whoever sees a rainbow in its colors must recite: 'Blessed is the One who remembers the covenant.' For this is the holy enduring covenant that the blessed Holy One placed [215a] on earth, guaranteeing that the waters of the flood would never overwhelm it again. Because when the wicked proliferate in the world, the blessed Holy One wants to annihilate them; but then He remembers, on their behalf, this oath, as is written: *As I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth* (Isaiah 54:9)."[51]

Rabbi Yose said, "The rainbow appears in order to protect the world. This may be compared to a king, who, whenever his son sins against him, comes to punish him—but the *matronita* appears in splendid garments of royalty. The king sees her, and eliminates his anger against his son and rejoices with her. Thus, *I will see her, to remember the everlasting covenant* (Genesis 9:16). Therefore the rainbow appears over the world only in splendid garments of royalty.[52]

"When there is a righteous person on earth, he himself is the covenant, fulfilling the covenant, and he protects the world. When there is no righteous person, behold, a rainbow, demonstrating that the world is poised on destruction—were it not for this rainbow."[53]

Rabbi El'azar said, "This rainbow is never clothed in anything but the garments of the primordial patriarchs: green, red, and white. Green is the garment of Abraham, imbued with this color when Ishmael issued from him. Red is the color of Isaac, for red came imbuing when Esau issued from him, and that red spread until the planet מאדים (*Ma'dim*), Mars, to which Esau is linked. White is the fine garment of Jacob, whose countenance never changed."[54]

Rabbi Abba said, “That is fine, but the Holy Lamp said as follows: White is Abraham, who was whitened by the white-hot fire. Red is Isaac, surely. Green is Jacob, situated between two colors. Of Jacob is written *Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face become white* (Isaiah 29:22), for his whole bed was perfect. So it is: *Jacob shall not now be ashamed*—appearing red like Isaac, from whom issued Esau. *Neither shall his face become white*—appearing white like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael. Rather, he absorbs colors, adorning himself with them beyond his fathers. [215b] In these garments, the rainbow clothes Herself when She appears before the King.[55]

“Come and see: Mystery of the holy Covenant is the letter י (*yod*), crowned with a supernal insignia. This is what is engraved in the covenant constantly, eternally. And because Phinehas acted zealously for the covenant, this letter was inscribed in his name here: פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas—a small י (*yod*), a י (*yod*) that is Covenant, surely, issuing from supernal holy י (*yod*).[56]

“Therefore he endures in complete vitality before the Holy King, not perishing from the world. So he is נקי (*naqi*), *innocent*, of that sin of Peor and never perishes from the world.[57]

“*And where were the upright obliterated*?—Nadab and Abihu, who, by virtue of him, were not annihilated from that world.”[58] [217a]

Rabbi Shim’on was sitting and delving into this portion when his son, Rabbi El’azar, came and asked him, “What do Nadab and Abihu have to do with Phinehas? If we say that Phinehas didn’t exist in the world when they died and only later came into the world, restoring their place—not so, for, in fact, Phinehas was in the world, serving as deputy high priest, his soul enduring vitally within him!”[59]

He replied, “My son, there is a sublime mystery here, as follows: When [Nadab and Abihu] departed from the world,

they were not concealed beneath the wings of the holy Rock. Why? Because it is written *and they had no children* (Numbers 3:4)—for they diminished the image of the King, despite being worthy of the high priesthood.[60]

"When Phinehas acted zealously for the holy covenant—entering amidst the multitudes and hoisting the adulterers on a spear in the sight of all Israel, with all the hordes of the tribe of Simeon coming at him—his soul flew away from him. Two souls that were naked, placeless, approached her, and they merged as one; and his soul returned intermingled—a spirit mingled with two spirits, invigorated within him. Then he attained their place, to become high priest, which he did not deserve previously.[61]

"So he was נקי (*naqi*), *innocent* (Job 4:7), not perishing at that moment—his spirit did not perish when it flew away from him.[62]

"*And where were the upright obliterated?* (ibid.)—the sons of Aaron, for what was lost in their lifetime returned to the world. Thus of Phinehas is written *son of, son of* (Numbers 25:11), twice.[63]

"*Phinehas son of Eleazar* (Numbers 25:11). What is written before this portion? *YHVH said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people and impale them to YHVH, facing the sun'* (ibid., 4). Now, was it because they would have killed them at night or on a cloudy day, that it is written *facing the sun?*"[64]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "So that their death would be in public, just as they sinned in public."

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Not for this was it said [*facing the sun*]. Rather, from here we learn: On whatever rung a person sins against the blessed Holy One, at that very place he must mend his soul. They sinned against the Holy Covenant, which is called *sun*, so the judgment and reparation were *facing the sun* and nowhere else. From here we learn that a person must mend his soul only in the

place against which he sinned, and whoever fails to do so never attains restoration fittingly."[65]

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, "*The trees of YHVH drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon that He planted*… (Psalms 104:16–17). What is written before? *And wine that gladdens the human heart—to make the face shine from oil—and bread that sustains the human heart* (ibid., 15). Now, what is the connection between one and the other? Well, we have learned as follows: It is written *He makes grass sprout for the beast, herbage for the labor of humankind, to bring forth bread from the earth* (ibid., 14). Now, was it merely to praise *the beast* for having *grass* that David came to speak in the Holy Spirit? Rather, *He makes grass sprout*—those six hundred million angelic messengers who were created on the second day of Creation, all of them flaming fire. These are *grass*. Why *grass*? Because they grow like *grass*. Every single day they are suddenly cut down, and afterward they grow back as before.[66]

"Therefore it is written: *He makes grass sprout for the beast*—as is written: *The righteous one knows the soul of his beast* (Proverbs 12:10). And we have learned: A thousand mountains grow for Her every single day, and every single mountain is six hundred thousand, and She eats.[67]

"*Herbage for the service of* הָאָדָם (*ha-adam*), *the human*—souls of the righteous, which that אָדָם (*adam*), *human*, who rides and controls *the beast*, consumes and ingests. By virtue of them, the whole world is nourished from that *Adam*, of whom is written *Upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of adam, a human* (Ezekiel 1:26). Therefore it is written: [*herbage for the service of*] *ha-adam, the human*—the one who is well known—in order *to bring forth bread from the earth*, to bring forth nourishment for the world *from the* holy *earth*.[68]

"*And wine*—old wine, flowing from above.[69]

“*That gladdens the heart of* אנוש (*enosh*), *a human being*. *Enosh*—mystery of that youth [217b] who attains old age and is restored as originally. Of this is written *Enosh, A human being—his days are like grass* (Psalms 103:15).[70]

“*To make faces shine*—the *faces* called ‘large face’ and ‘small face.’[71]

“*From oil*—from the flow of the World that is Coming, holy supernal anointing oil.[72]

“*And bread* [*that sustains*] *the heart of* אנוש (*enosh*), *a human being*—the *bread* that the skies exude, grinding manna for nourishment of the righteous, unspecified. From there it flows to numerous cohorts, called *the heart of enosh* —all coming from the supernal flow.[73]

“*The trees of YHVH drink their fill*—supernal inner trees.[74]

“*The cedars of Lebanon* [*that He planted*]—for they were uprooted, and the blessed Holy One *planted* them. What is the difference between *the trees of YHVH* and *the cedars of Lebanon? The trees of YHVH* are the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; *the cedars of Lebanon* are fifty gates called ‘five hundred years.’[75]

“*Where birds make their nest* (Psalms 104:17)—in their shade, souls of the righteous make their nest, and all holy cohorts are nourished from there.[76]

“חסידה (*Ḥasidah*), *The stork* (ibid.)—daughter of our father Abraham, who is called חסיד (*Ḥasid*), Devout, and who performed חסד (*ḥesed*), kindness, for all inhabitants of the world. So She is called *ḥasidah*.[77]

“*Whose home is the junipers* (ibid.)—between the arms of the world.”[78]

Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Yose rose to study Torah at midnight. While they were sitting and studying, Rabbi Yose said, “Regarding what Rabbi Ḥiyya said about *Enosh, A human being—his days are like grass* (Psalms 103:15), he spoke well; but how has the conclusion been established, as is

written: *For a wind passes by him and he is no more, and his place no longer knows him* (ibid., 16)?[79]

He replied, “Certainly as follows: *Enosh, A human being—his days are like grass*, as [Rabbi Ḥiyya] said. *Like the bloom of the field* (ibid., 15)—renewed, restored as originally; thus *he blooms* (ibid.), rising. Why? *For* רוח (*ruaḥ*), *a spirit, passes by him and he is no more* (ibid., 16)—a supernal, concealed, and holy *spirit*, hidden away from all, which absorbs him, and then *he is no more*. This is the mystery of Enoch, of whom is written *he was no more*. Why? *For Elohim took him* (Genesis 5:24)—supernal *Elohim*; hidden, concealed *spirit*.[80]

“*And his place no longer knows him*—for the small *spirit* is absorbed by the supernal *spirit*.[81]

“What is written next? *But YHVH’s kindness is* ועד עולם מעולם (*me-olam ve-ad olam*), *from everlasting to everlasting* (Psalms 103:17)—the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, grasps him, and gives birth to him as originally; so his juvenescence is renewed like the eagle’s and he turns back into a youth.”[82]

While they were sitting, they saw a shadow hovering over them—going to and fro in the house. They were astonished.[83]

Rabbi Abba said, “Yose, my son, I will tell you what happened to me with the Holy Lamp. One day we were walking in the valley of Ono, delving into Torah that whole [218a] day. Due to the intensity of the sun, we sat ourselves down in the cleft of a certain rock.[84]

“I said to him, ‘How is it that whenever the wicked proliferate in the world, the righteous among them are smitten on their account? For we have learned as follows: “For a generation’s sin, the righteous are seized.” Why? If because they do not reprimand the world for their deeds, well, there are many who do reprimand but are not heeded, and the righteous are overwhelmed by them. And if it is so that there will be no one to protect the world, then let them

not die and not be seized for the sins [of the world], since the righteous find joy in the destruction [of the wicked].’[85]

“He replied, ‘For a generation’s sin, the righteous are surely seized, and we have established these matters. But when the righteous are seized with illness or afflictions, it is in order to atone for the world; then all sins of the generation are purged.[86]

“‘How do we know this? From all members of the body. When all the members are in distress—grave illness prevailing over them—one member must suffer so that all of them may be healed. Which one is it? The arm. The arm is struck and blood is drawn from it, and then all members of the body are healed.[87]

“‘Similarly, inhabitants of the world are bodily members, interlinked. When the blessed Holy One wishes to grant healing to the world, He strikes one righteous person among them, and through him provides healing to all. How do we know this? As is written: *But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquities, and by his wound we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5). *And by his wound*—bloodletting, like someone letting blood from his arm. *By* that *wound we are healed*—healing comes to us, to all members of the body.[88]

“‘Never is a righteous person smitten except to provide healing to the generation and to atone for them. This is the mystery of ‘a righteous one who suffers,’ for the Other Side prefers most of all that Judgment should overwhelm a righteous one—for then he does not care about the whole world and ignores them because of the joy of dominating him. Yet that righteous person attains supreme dominion in this world and in the world that is coming. As for ‘a righteous one [218b] who prospers,’ this is because the blessed Holy One does not care to atone for the world.’[89]

“I said to him, ‘If they didn’t live at the same time, fine. But there is one righteous person here and another right nearby—the first one suffering illness and affliction, while the other enjoys all the goodness of the world!’[90]

“He replied, ‘One or two of them is enough, since the blessed Holy One does not wish to strike all of them—just as it is unnecessary to strike and let blood from more than one arm in order to provide healing for all the bodily members. Similarly, one righteous person suffices.[91]

“‘If the illness becomes severe, spreading through all the members, then blood must be let from two arms. Similarly, if grave sins proliferate in the world, then all the righteous are smitten, to provide healing to the whole generation. But when [the sins] are not so numerous, then one righteous person is struck, and the rest of the righteous are left in peace, for the world does not need all of them to suffer. Once the people are healed, the righteous are healed. Sometimes they suffer illness throughout their lives to protect the generation; once they die, all are healed and pardoned—when sins are extremely grave.’[92]

“We rose and walked on. The intensity of the sun was extreme, oppressing us on the way. We saw trees in the desert, with water beneath them; we sat down in the shade of a desert tree.

“I asked him, ‘What about this practice performed by no other nation in the world, just Israel alone? For when they study Torah, they sway back and forth, without having learned it from anyone in the world, and they can’t keep still.’[93]

“He replied, ‘You have reminded me of a sublime matter—and inhabitants of the world do not know or care!’

“He sat for a while and wept. Then he said, ‘Woe to the world! Woe to people who go around like cattle in the field with no intelligence! By this matter alone, the souls of Israel are distinguished from the souls of other nations. The souls of Israel have been hewn from the holy burning Lamp, as is written: *The soul of a human is the lamp of* YHVH (Proverbs 20:27). When this *lamp* is linked [219a] to Torah above, the light upon it is not still for even an instant. This is the mystery of *O* Elohim*, do not be silent!* (Psalms 83:2). Similarly,

it is written: *O you who praise YHVH, do not be silent!* (Isaiah 62:6)—no stillness for you.

"'Once the light of a lamp clings to the wick, that light is never still, but rather sways back and forth, never staying still. Similarly with Israel, whose souls derive from that light of the Lamp. As soon as they cling to words of Torah, the light is kindled—they cannot keep still; they sway back and forth and in all directions like the light of a lamp, for it is written: *The soul of a human is the lamp of YHVH*.[94]

"'And it is written: *You are human* (Ezekiel 34:31)—*you are human*, not other nations. The souls of other nations are from extinguished stubble, with no light spreading over them. So they have stillness and do not sway, for they have no Torah by which to be kindled, and no light spreads over them. They stand like trees on fire—burning, yet without light spreading over them. So they keep still without any light at all.'"[95]

Rabbi Yose said, "This is elucidation of the matter. Happy is my share—that I was privileged to hear this!" [219b]

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, "*Sing to YHVH a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth—you who sail the sea and you creatures in it, you coastlands and their inhabitants!* (Isaiah 42:10). How beloved are Israel to the blessed Holy One, for their joy is only in Him and their praise only for Him! For we have learned as follows: Any joy of Israel in which they do not include the blessed Holy One is no joy at all, and Samael and his whole band lie in wait to denounce that joy. For Israel has no joy without His participation.[96]

"How do we know? As is written: *Israel will rejoice* בעושיו (*be-osav*), *with his Maker* (Psalms 149:2). בעושיו (*Be-osav*), *With his Makers*—the verse should read בעושו (*be-oso*), *with his Maker*, as is said: העושו יגש חרבו (*Ha-oso yaggesh ḥarbo*), *Let his Maker draw His sword against him* (Job 40:19). However, *be-osav, with his Makers*—because a person is made in

partnership between a man, a woman, and the blessed Holy One. Concerning this mystery, it is written *Let us make a human* (Genesis 1:26)—in partnership. For we have learned: The blessed Holy One made three artisans by whom to produce the world, namely, heaven, water, and earth—each of whom performed for one day and then resumed as before.[97]

"On the first day, heaven produced its craft, as is written: *God said, 'Let there be light'* (Genesis 1:3). On the second day, water generated a craft, as is written: *God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water'* (ibid., 6). Half of the water ascended on high, and half of the water remained below; and had the waters not divided, the world would not have endured. On the third day, earth generated as she had been commanded, as is written: *God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation ...,'* and it is written *The earth sprouted* [*vegetation*...] (ibid., 11–12).

"Until here, each of these three artisans produced its craft, doing as they had been commanded. Three other days remained. The first artisan was commanded to produce his craft, as is written: *Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven* (Genesis 1:14)—this was [done by] heaven. On the fifth day, water, the other artisan, produced, as is written: *Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living beings* (ibid., 20). On the sixth day, earth generated its craft, as is written: *Let the earth bring forth living beings of each kind and cattle and crawling things* ... (ibid., 24).[98]

"Once these three artisans had completed their activity, the blessed Holy One said to them, 'I have one work of art to produce, namely, a human being. Join yourselves together, and *Let us make a human*—I along with you. The body is yours, and I will be in partnership with you, and *let us make a human*.'[99]

"Just as in the beginning there was partnership, so, too, afterward. Father and mother, corresponding to the earth,

and the blessed Holy One, who collaborates with them. Concerning this mystery, it is written *be-osav, with his Makers*.[100]

"Even if one's father and mother have departed from this world, joy embraces the whole partnership. For we have learned: When a person [220a] includes the blessed Holy One in his joy, the blessed Holy One comes to the Garden of Eden and plucks from there his father and mother—who are His partners—and brings them to that rejoicing; and all of them are present there, yet people do not know.[101]

"However, in a person's distress, the blessed Holy One alone is present with him, and He does not inform his father and mother—as is written: *In my distress I called to YHVH, to my God I cried out. From His palace He heard my voice, and my cry before Him came into His ears* (Psalms 18:7)."

That shadow returned as before and moved through the house in the shape of a man. Rabbi Abba fell on his face.[102]

Rabbi Yose said, "I remember that in this place I saw Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir. One day he was standing in this spot and said as follows: 'פינחס (*Pineḥas*), *Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest* (Numbers 25:11)—with a small letter י (*yod*). For two alphabets are inscribed: an alphabet of large letters and an alphabet of small letters. The large letters are of the World that is Coming, and the small letters are of the Lower World—the holy enduring Covenant. Since Phinehas acted zealously for this Covenant, a small י (*yod*) was added to him, mystery of this Covenant.[103]

"'At that time, the blessed Holy One said, "What should I do with Moses? This Covenant belongs to him. To give it to someone else without Moses' knowledge is not fitting."[104]

"'The blessed Holy One began speaking to Moses, "Moses, *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest*."[105]

“‘Moses said, “Master of all worlds, what about him?”

“‘He replied, “Moses, you are the one who risked your life for Israel several times so that they would not be annihilated from the world, and he *turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel* (Numbers 25:11)….”[106]

“‘Moses asked, “What do You want?”

“‘He replied, “That your Bride may abide in him.”[107]

“‘Moses said, “Wholeheartedly—let Her be with him.”

“‘He said, “Say with your own mouth, and in a loud voice, that you are transmitting Her to him wholeheartedly.” As is written: *Therefore say:*—you say, willingly—*I hereby grant him my covenant of peace* (Numbers 25:12). It was Moses who said *I hereby grant him*…. For if the blessed Holy One said this, Scripture should have stated *Therefore I hereby grant him My covenant*. But rather, it is written *Therefore say: I hereby grant him my covenant*. Moses said, *I hereby grant him my covenant of peace*.[108]

“‘Now, if you say that She was removed from Moses—no! Rather, like a lamp: this one benefits, while that one is not diminished.’”[109]

That shade came and sat down and kissed him. They heard a voice saying, “Make room, make room for Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir, who is with you!”[110]

For we have learned: Any place in which a righteous person innovates words of Torah, he comes to visit when he is in that world—especially when other righteous ones are present there, innovating words of Torah in that place. Like this—for Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir came to visit his place and found these righteous ones innovating words of Torah, and that word of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir was rejuvenated in his presence.[111]

[Rabbi Abba] said, “The statement of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir is fine; for, in fact, it is not written *Therefore say to him*, but rather *Therefore say*. Now, was this utterance from this pious one hidden away in your hand, and you never

mentioned it? Happy is our share, to be here in the company of this holy shade!”[112]

He, too, opened, speaking in the name of Rabbi Pinḥas, *“All that your hand finds to do, do with your power; for there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, where you are going* (Ecclesiastes 9:10). How fitting it is for a person, as long as the lamp is burning and hovering over his head, to strive to do the will of his Lord. For the light of that lamp is כח (*koaḥ*), power, hovering over him; and of this is written *Please, let the power of YHVH be great* (Numbers 14:17). *The power of YHVH—the power* hovering over the heads of the righteous and of all those who strive to do the will of their Lord.[113]

“Concerning this, we have learned that whoever utters the response ‘Amen! May His great Name be blessed’ should bless with all his power—this is ‘his power.’ Surely, he must arouse all his limbs with great power, because by energizing himself with powerful arousal, that holy supernal *power* is aroused, ascending into holiness—and the power and might of the Other Side are broken. Thus, [220b] *with your power* you must do the will of your Lord.[114]

“*For there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, where you are going*. For in that *power* there is *doing*—the effort to strive in this world, which is called *doing*, the world of doing, to complete the end of Thought.[115]

“*Or reckoning*—the world that depends on speech, for *reckoning* depends on speech. Consequently, all numerologies, solstices, equinoxes, and intercalations in the world belong to the Moon.[116]

“*Or knowledge*—mystery of six sides dependent on Thought and called ‘the world of that Thought.’[117]

“*Or wisdom*—on which all depends.[118]

“All of these are included in that *power*, which is not so on the side of *Sheol*, rung of Hell. Surely, every person who

does not engage with this *power* in this world—to enter thereby into *doing, reckoning, knowledge, and wisdom*—will eventually enter *Sheol*, which has no *doing, reckoning, knowledge, or wisdom*. For the Other Side is the way of Sheol, as is written: *Her house is the way to Sheol* (Proverbs 7:27). Whoever slackens from this holy *power* is overwhelmed by the Other Side, whose *house is Sheol*.[119]

"*Where you are going*. Now, do all inhabitants of the world go to Sheol? Yes. But they come up immediately, as is written: *He brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6)—except for those wicked ones who never considered *teshuvah*, who go down and do not come up.[120]

"Even the completely righteous go down there. Why do they go down? Because they take some of the wicked from there and bring them up above, where they make them conceive *teshuvah*. Who are those? Those who considered engaging in *teshuvah* in this world, but failed to do so before departing from the world. For their sake, the righteous go down into Sheol and grasp them and bring them up from there."[121]

Rabbi Yose said, "It is written: *One by one to find* חשבון (*ḥeshbon*), *a reckoning* (Ecclesiastes 7:27). The *reckoning* of numerologies, abiding in the Moon—on which rung of Hers are they found?"[122]

[Rabbi Abba] did not reply. Then he said, "I have heard, but I don't remember the matter."

That shade rose and slapped Rabbi Abba's eyes. He fell on his face out of fear.[123]

While he was on his face, a verse fell into his mouth: *Your eyes, pools* בחשבון (*be-ḥeshbon*), *in Heshbon, by the gate of the daughter of nobles* (Song of Songs 7:5). These eyes of Hers are savories within supernal Wisdom, drawn from above; and by *ḥeshbon, reckoning*, solstices, equinoxes, and intercalations, they are filled, becoming *pools*, waters flowing in all directions—those eyes! Until they amount to every *reckoning* of the moon outside, and stars and

constellations, making a *reckoning*. This is *by the gate of Bath Rabbim*—the moon outside."[124]

Rabbi Abba said to Rabbi Yose, "That holy pearl that was in your possession from the holy company that is with us—it is so fine that I must return to it! For surely one must not send a woman to be in another place until her husband gives her permission. First, the husband is informed and persuaded, so that he will command her and give her permission to go to that place.[125]

"Similarly, the blessed Holy One persuaded Moses; and until he gave Her permission—and He told him, 'You say *I hereby grant him my covenant of peace* (Numbers 25:12),' to abide in [Phinehas] and to go there—She did not go.[126]

"How do we know this? From Righteous One of the world, who gives Her permission to be among the righteous in this world, with whom She sits like a bride in her ornaments—and Righteous One of the world sees and rejoices in this. But She lies in the arms of Her husband, and resumes being with them, and returns to Her husband—as is said: *In the evening she comes, and in the morning she returns* (Esther 2:14). *In the evening she comes* to Her husband; *and in the morning she returns* to the righteous on earth—all with the permission of Her husband, as is written: *The righteous one gives generously* (Psalms 37:21).[127]

"Moses said as follows: *'I hereby give him*—just as Righteous One on high *gives*, so I, too, *hereby give*.' A gift presented on condition that it be returned is a valid gift.[128]

"On account of this Covenant, [Phinehas] gained the high priesthood; and if She had not been with him, Phinehas would not have been linked to the rung of high priesthood, for Covenant always clings to the supernal right, and this supernal right is destined to build the Temple, which is Covenant."[129]

Rabbi Abba said, “I remember something that I heard from the Holy Lamp, who heard it in the name of Rabbi Eli’ezer. One day, a certain clever Gentile came to him and said, ‘Old man, old man, three questions [221a] I want to pose to you. First, you say that another Temple will be built for you, whereas only two were supposed to be built: the First Temple and the Second Temple—a Third Temple and a Fourth Temple you will not find in the Torah! Surely, what was meant to be built has already been built, and there will never be any more; for, after all, Scripture calls them *the two houses of Israel* (Isaiah 8:14), and it is written *The glory of this last house will be greater than the first* (Haggai 2:9).[130]

“‘Furthermore, you say that you’re closer to the supernal King than all other nations. Well, one who is close to the King is always happy, free from sorrow and distress; but you are in greater sorrow, distress, and agony than all other nations. As for us, no sorrow, distress, or agony even comes near us. We are close to the supernal King, and you are far from Him, which is why you suffer sorrow and distress, mourning and agony, which we do not!

“‘Furthermore, you don’t eat any animal that has not been slaughtered properly or is diseased or defective, so that you will be healthy and your bodies will be fit. Well, we eat whatever we want, and we are vigorous and healthy, all our limbs enduring firmly; whereas you—who don’t eat—are all weak, sickly, and broken more than all other peoples. A people hated by your God entirely!’[131]

“[The Gentile] said, ‘Old man, old man, don’t say anything to me, because I won’t listen to you or accept it!’

“Rabbi Eli’ezer raised his eyes and gazed at him, and he turned into a heap of bones.[132]

“When his wrath subsided, he turned his head and wept. He said, *‘YHVH our Lord, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth!* (Psalms 8:2). How mighty is the holy power throughout the earth! There is not a single tiny word

appearing in the Torah that has not issued from the mouth of the blessed Holy One. These things asked by that wicked man I asked Elijah one day, and he said that they had been presented in the Heavenly Academy before the blessed Holy One.[133]

"'For when Israel came out of Egypt, the blessed Holy One wished to make them on earth like holy angels above, and He wanted to build for them a holy house, bring it down from the utmost heavens, and plant Israel as a holy shoot corresponding to the image above. As is written: *You will bring them, You will plant them on the mount of Your heritage*. In which place? *A firm place for Your dwelling You fashioned, O* YHVH (Exodus 15:17)—in the one that *You fashioned* Yourself, no one else—the First Temple. *The sanctuary, O* YHVH*, Your hands firmly founded*—the Second Temple. Both of them, the artistry of the blessed Holy One.[134]

"'But because they angered Him in the desert, they died, and the blessed Holy One brought into the Land their children—who learned their ways—and the house was built by human hands. Consequently, it did not endure; and Solomon said, *Unless* YHVH *builds the house, its builders labor in vain* (Psalms 127:1), for it has no endurance.[135]

"'In the days of Ezra, sin took its toll—due to various transgressions—and they were forced to build it themselves, so it did not endure. Until now, the original building of the blessed Holy One has never appeared in the world. For it is written: YHVH *builds Jerusalem* (Psalms 147:2)—He and no one else. It is this building we await, not a human building, which has no endurance at all.[136]

"'The blessed Holy One will bring down the First Temple and the Second Temple as one from above—the First Temple, concealed; the Second Temple, revealed. The house called the Second Temple will be revealed, so that the artistry of the blessed Holy One will be visible to the whole world—total joy, aspiration of the heart, in full existence.[137]

“‘That First Temple, concealed, will ascend high above the one revealed; and the whole world will see clouds of glory surrounding the revealed one; and within those clouds will be the First Temple, in hidden fashioning, rising to the height of the glorious heavens. It is this building that we await, which has never existed in the world.

“‘Even the city of Jerusalem will not be the work of human hands, for it is written: *I Myself—declares YHVH—will be a wall of fire around her*… (Zechariah 2:9). If this is what is written about the city, all the more so for the Temple, which is His dwelling. This act should have happened at first, when Israel came out of Egypt, but it has been deferred to the end of days in the final redemption.[138] [221b]

“‘As for the other question, surely we are closer to the supernal King than all other nations! Surely it is so, for the blessed Holy One made Israel the heart of the whole world. So is Israel among the other nations: the heart among the limbs of the body. All inhabitants of the world are the limbs, while Israel is the heart in their midst; and if Israel did not exist in the world, no nation could endure for even a moment—like limbs without a heart. Therefore they are in the middle of the whole world—the heart within the limbs.

“‘Israel conducts herself among the other nations like the heart among the limbs. The heart is tender and weak, yet it is the vitality of all the limbs. None of the limbs knows pain, distress, and agony at all, only the heart, containing vitality and intelligence. [Pain] comes nowhere near the other limbs, since they have no vitality and know nothing. None of the other limbs come near the king—who is the intelligence and wisdom located in the brain—only the heart. The other limbs are far from him and know nothing about him. Similarly, Israel is close to the Holy King, whereas the other nations are far from Him.[139]

“‘As for the other question—that Israel eats no animal that has not been slaughtered properly or is diseased or defective, or the dirty filth of detestable and creeping things, as do other nations—so it is. For, in fact, the heart—which is tender and weak, yet king and vitality of all the other limbs—takes for its nourishment only the purest and clearest of all the blood, so its food is cleanest and most refined of all, whereas the remaining refuse it leaves for all the other limbs. These other limbs do not care about this; rather, they take the refuse and the worst and most foul of all—and they are fittingly strong.[140]

“‘Consequently, among the other limbs there are blisters, inflammation, rash, and scaly affliction; whereas for the heart, none of these at all. Rather, it is cleanest and purest of all, with no blemish whatsoever. Concerning this it is written: *You are wholly beautiful, my love; there is no blemish in you* (Song of Songs 4:7).”’

Rabbi Yose came and kissed his hands. He said, “If I have come into the world just to hear this, it is enough!”[141]

The name of the slain Israelite man, who was slain with the Midianite woman (Numbers 25:14). Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “This verse should have been written as follows: *The name of the Israelite man whom Phinehas slayed*—and not *the slain* [*Israelite man*], *who was slain*. Scripture expresses it only in a concealed manner.[142]

“But this is what Rabbi El’azar said: Since the blessed Holy One had elevated Phinehas to the high priesthood, He did not want to mention him in the context of killing a human being, for this is not fitting for a high priest. Before He elevated him to the high priesthood, He mentioned his name: *Phinehas saw… and he took a spear… and stabbed the two of them* (Numbers 25:7–8). Once He elevated him to become high priest, his name is not mentioned in the context of killing, for this is unbefitting; and the blessed Holy One felt concern for his honor, since it is unseemly for

a high priest to be mentioned in the context of killing. *And the name of the woman who was slain, the Midianite* (ibid., 15), similarly."[143]

Rabbi Shim'on was traveling from Cappadocia to Lydda, accompanied by Rabbi Yehudah. As they were going, they were [about to be] encountered by Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, with two men goading [his donkey] behind him. Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey stood still; they goaded him, but he did not move.[144]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, "Let him be, for he must have smelled the scent of new faces—or a miracle is about to be performed for us!"[145]

While they were there, Rabbi Shim'on emerged from behind a rock; the donkey began to move. Rabbi Pinḥas said to them, "Didn't I tell you that he smelled the scent of new faces?"

Rabbi Pinḥas dismounted and embraced him, weeping. He said to him, "I saw in a dream that *Shekhinah* was coming to me and giving me great presents, and I rejoiced in Her. Now, look, just like I saw!"[146]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "From the sound of your donkey's hooves, I knew it was you. Now, joy is complete."

Rabbi Pinḥas said, "Let us sit down somewhere, since words of Torah require thirsting clarity."[147]

They found a spring of water and a tree, and sat down.

Rabbi Pinḥas said, "I was reflecting that in the revival of the dead, the blessed Holy One will form them in a different manner. What is now first will then be last. How do we know this? From those bones—the bones that the blessed Holy One revived by the hand of Ezekiel, as is written: *The bones came together, bone to bone*—first. And then it is written: [222a] *I saw, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh grew, and skin formed on them above; but there was no* רוח (*ruaḥ*) *breath, in them* (Ezekiel 37:7–8). For, in fact, what is stripped off first will then be last: at first one is

stripped of *ruaḥ*, afterward skin and flesh, and afterward bones."[148]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Concerning this the ancient ones disputed; but with these bones revived by the blessed Holy One, He performed miracles and remarkable signs.

"Come and see what is written: *Remember, now, that like clay You worked me, and to dust You will return me* (Job 10:9). What is written next? *Will You not pour me out like milk, and like cheese congeal me? With skin and flesh You will clothe me, with bones and sinews weave me* (ibid., 10–11). After a person has decayed in the dust—and the time of revival of the dead has arrived—the blessed Holy One will make that enduring bone like dough, flowing as *milk*; and from that pure flow, sparkling in clarity, the bone will be blended, liquefied like milk. Afterward He will congeal it, and it will be fashioned in the form of curdled *cheese*; and afterward *skin* and *flesh* and *bones* will be drawn over it. As is written: *Will You not pour me out like milk?* It is not written *Did You not pour me out?* but rather *Will You not pour me out?* It is not written [*Did You not*] *congeal me?* but rather [*Will You not*] *congeal me?* It is not written *With skin and flesh You clothed me*, but rather *You will clothe me*. It is not written *You wove me*, but rather *You will weave me*.[149]

"Afterward, what is written? *Life and kindness You granted me* (Job 10:12)—רוחא (*ruḥa*), the spirit, of life. Now, you might say, '*You granted me*—and it is not written *You will grant*.' Well, [Job] said as follows: '*Life and kindness You granted me* in this world, pouring into me the spirit of life. But ופקודתך שמרה רוחי (*u-phquddatekha shamerah ruḥi*), *and Your providence preserved my spirit* (ibid.), for You intend לפקדא (*le-phaqqada*), to entrust, it first—*shamerah ruḥi, She preserved my spirit*.[150]

"Mystery of the matter: All souls of the righteous are treasured away and concealed beneath the King's throne, and She preserves them, to restore them to their place—as is written: ופקודתך (*U-phquddatekha*), *And Your providence,*

preserved my spirit. What is meant by פקודתך (*pequddatekha*)? As is said: *May another man take* פקודתו (*pequddato*), *the one over whom he is appointed* (Psalms 109:8). *Pequddatekha*, surely!—the King's *Matronita*, in whose hands all spirits are פקדונין (*piqdonin*), pledges, as is written: *In Your hand* אפקיד (*aphqid*), *I entrust, my spirit…* (Psalms 31:6), and She preserves them. Thus, *preserved my spirit* (Job 10:12)—She preserves it.[151]

"Similarly, *Preserve my soul, for I am faithful* (Psalms 86:2). *Preserve*—the King's *Matronita*, who preserves *my soul* because *I am faithful*. Everywhere it is written namelessly, this is *Matronita*—as is said: *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1); *He said, 'If you really heed'* (Exodus 15:26)."[152]

Rabbi Pinḥas wept, and said, 'Didn't I tell you that *Shekhinah* gave me presents and gifts? Happy is my share, that I have seen you and heard this!"[153]

He said to him, "At that time—granted, that bone. But as for the other bones that exist, what will happen to them?"[154]

He replied, "All of them will be included in the flow of this bone and merge with it, and all will become a single dough, out of which the form will be fashioned, as has been said. As is written: *He will invigorate your bones* (Isaiah 58:11). What is meant by יחליץ (*yaḥalits*), *He will invigorate*? As is said: חלץ (*Ḥalats*), *He has withdrawn, from them* (Hosea 5:6)—all of them will be withdrawn from their existence and be incorporated in that bone, becoming a single dough; and then, *you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11)."[155] [224a]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, "I have been pondering. שמירה (*Shemirah*), Keeping, is surely in the heart, and the heart is a model of the Heart. Thus, שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep* (Deuteronomy 5:12), pertains to the heart and nowhere else. זכירה (*Zekhirah*), Remembering, pertains to the male, the brain, which rides and controls the heart. Memory is only in the brain. Thus,

זכור (*Zakhor*), *Remember* (Exodus 20:8), for the male; and שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep*, for the female.[156]

"The brain is male, riding upon the heart; the heart controls and rides upon the liver. The liver is Samael and the serpent together, becoming one, [224b] the lobe of the liver and the liver. Therefore in a sacrifice, the lobe of the liver is the serpent, and the liver is food for the male, mystery of Samael."[157]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Certainly so, and fine! Elucidation of the matter—mystery and secrets of sacrifice—are as follows. The liver obtains first, together with its lobe—Samael and his mate—and all those veins of the liver, their cohorts and camps. What they obtain is the fatty and oily parts of the sacrifice, and then all is offered to the heart.[158]

"The heart obtains nothing of it all except the confession made over it, ascending in that smoke, and the prayer offered over that sacrifice. The heart offers to the brain the unifying aspiration of the priest and the joy of the Levites. The brain is the male, deriving from the supernal brain. The brain offers to the most concealed of all, completely unknown, and they are linked with one another; the brain offers spiritual pleasure from all.[159]

"Veins of the liver are אישים (*ishim*), personages, and those legions of theirs. The liver, as has been said; יותרת (*yoteret*), the lobe, his female. Why is she called *yoteret*, excess? Because she cleaves to her male only when she has time to spare after committing her adulteries and leaving them.[160]

"Furthermore, *yoteret*, excess—the female, because when she wants to join with a man she appears to him as leftovers, totally unimportant. Afterward, little by little, she adorns herself, until she is in single union with him.[161]

"From these veins of the liver, other smaller ones spread out, of various kinds; and they all obtain the sacrificial portions and fat, all included in the liver.[162]

“The heart—essence of holiness—obtains and offers, as has been said. The heart rests upon the two kidneys—two cherubim, giving counsel—and they are far and near, right and left. All of them obtain and consume, each one fittingly, until all is bound as one.[163]

“*The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit* (Psalms 51:19)—this is offered to the heart. *A broken spirit*—confession and its prayer, for surely *the spirit returns to* [225a] *Elohim* (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The liver offers it to the heart, for [the liver] becomes its advocate, and all is a single bond in sacrifice.[164]

“From the liver issue all illness and affliction to all members of the body, and there they dwell. The heart is purest of all, and from it issue all goodness and health to all the bodily members—and all strength, joy, and wholeness, which all the members need.”[165] [225b]

He opened, saying, “*Trust in YHVH and do good. Dwell in the land and shepherd faith* (Psalms 37:3). *Trust in YHVH*—fittingly. *And do good*—perfection of the holy covenant, that you should perfect and preserve it fittingly. If you do so, you will become great in the land, and that *faith* above will be nourished by you and delighted by you.[166]

“Furthermore, *Delight upon YHVH, that He may grant you your heart’s desire* (ibid., 4). All this is arranged by perfection of the covenant; once it is perfected, all is perfected.[167]

“Because Phinehas acted zealously for the covenant, he attained all. Not only that, but he protected all of Israel; and in him was fulfilled *Delight* על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *above YHVH*, for he ascended and was linked above. And he shone with the primordial light created by the blessed Holy One, which was treasured away—with that light relished by Abraham, cluster of Aaron the priest.[168]

“Having ascended to the high priesthood, he is not mentioned in connection with the killing of Zimri, which

would not be fitting, so that he would not be entangled at all in the branches of the Other Side, which would be unseemly for him. For whoever kills is encroached upon by branches of the Other Side; and Phinehas was already linked with the right—and had no part at all in the Other Side, which is why he is not mentioned here. What would seem praiseworthy is for him a disgrace—a descent from the supernal rung to which he was linked. Thus it is written *the slain* [*Israelite man*], *who was slain. And the name of the woman who was slain, the Midianite* (Numbers 25:14–15).”[169]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Happy is the generation that hears your words of Torah! Happy is my share, that I attained this!”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Happy is the generation in which you and your devotion exist!”[170]

While they were sitting and speaking kindly to one another, Rabbi El’azar, the son of Rabbi Shim’on, came and found them there. Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Surely it is written: *When he saw them, Jacob said, ‘This is a camp of God!’* (Genesis 32:3).”[171]

Rabbi Shim’on said to [Rabbi El’azar], “Sit and expound the verse.”

Rabbi El’azar sat down. He opened, saying, “*Jacob went on his way, and angels of God encountered him* (Genesis 32:2). What is meant by ויפגעו (*va-yiphge’u*), *and encountered, him*? There is פגיעה (*pegi’ah*), encountering, for good, encountering for evil, and encountering for prayer. But when he went to Haran, what is written? ויפגע במקום (*Va-yiphga ba-maqom*), *He entreated the place* (ibid. 28:11)—it was the evening prayer that he offered in the location called *maqom, place*, as is said: *Look, there is maqom, a place, by Me* (Exodus 33:21), and the evening prayer is appropriate for that place.[172]

“Further, *Va-yiphga, He entreated, the place*—words of conciliation, for the holy sun came to the moon, Husband to Wife. From here we learn that a husband should approach his wife only with words of conciliation, soothing her, as is written: *He entreated the place*, and afterward, *he spent the night there* (Genesis 28:11). When Jacob came from Haran, it is written: ויפגעו (*va-yiphge’u*), *They entreated, him* (ibid. 32:2)—She sent messengers to conciliate him, so that he would come to Her.[173]

“*When he saw them, Jacob said, ‘This is a camp of Elohim!’* (Genesis 32:3). What is meant by *when he saw them*? Well, there were daytime angels and nighttime angels, and they were hidden from him and subsequently revealed to him; so it is written *when he saw them*.

“*This is a camp of Elohim!* Concerning those of the night, it is written [226a] *a camp of Elohim*; concerning those of the day, it is written זה (*zeh*), *this*. Thus, *He named that place* מחנים (*Maḥanayim*), *Double Camps* (ibid.). And now I see here holy camps. Happy is my path, that I came here!”[174]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Let him who opened the entrance expound!”

Rabbi El’azar said, “We have learned: ‘Whoever recites *A praise of David* (Psalms 145) three times daily is admitted to the world that is coming.’ And the reason why has already been stated. Now, if it is because of sustenance, well, sustenance and food are provided twice a day: in the morning and in the evening, as is written: *When YHVH gives you meat in the evening, and in the morning you eat your fill of bread* (Exodus 16:8). If so, why three times daily? Well, twice for the food of humanity and the whole world, and once to provide power to the place whose hands are open.[175]

“These two types of food differ here from one another. *You give them their food in its proper time* (Psalms 145:15)—the food of the wealthy, to whom He gives abundant food

in its proper time. This is one. The second, as is written: *and satisfying every living thing* רצון (*ratson*), *according to Your will* (ibid., 16)—the food of the poor, who are satisfied *according to Your will*, not with abundant food. *Opening your hand* (ibid.)—power to the place from whose open hands issue *ratson*, *favor*, and fullness for all.[176]

"Furthermore, we have learned that it is only twice a day, for these are mandatory for a person. And if one recites more, it is not out of obligation, but rather for praise amid King David's songs of praise. Why? Because it is fitting to ask for sustenance only after prayer and propitiating his Lord. The King should eat first, and afterward His servants. As is written: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk*. Afterward, *Eat, companions!*… (Song of Songs 5:1).[177]

"*I have eaten my honeycomb*—the prayer recited seated.[178]

"*With my honey*—recitation of *Shema*.

"*I have eaten* יערי (*ya'ri*), *my honeycomb*—the prayer recited seated, in that יער (*ya'ar*), forest of, [226b] Lebanon: *Yotser or* (Who forms light), and 'the *ophanim* and holy *ḥayyot*,' and 'all of them holy.' All of these are called *ya'ar*, forest—including trees and saplings.[179]

"*With my honey*—recitation of *Shema*, sweetest of all, with numerous honeycombs and sweets.

"*I have drunk my wine with my milk*—the prayer recited standing, flow of supernal preserved wine. This is in the first three.[180]

"*With my milk*—the last three blessings. These mingle with those.[181]

"Until here, food of the King. Afterward, *Eat, companions!*—above. *Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—below.[182]

"Consequently, there is no obligation [to pray] for food until after the prayer. But why in *minḥah*, toward evening,

before the prayer? Because before harsh Judgment prevails, while the face of the King is still shining, one should recite *A praise of David*, with this arrangement of food. For once Judgment prevails, looming over the world, it is inauspicious."[183]

Rabbi Pinḥas came and kissed him. [231a]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Let our master tell us some of those sublime words concerning Rosh Hashanah."

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "ויהי היום (*Va-yhi ha-yom*), *It happened on the day* (Job 1:6). Wherever it is written *Va-yhi, It happened*, there is sorrow; *Va-yhi bi-ymei, It happened in the days of*, sorrow surely! *Va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day* —a day on which there is sorrow, and this is Rosh Hashanah, a day when harsh Judgment looms over the world. *Va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day, that Elisha was passing through Shunem* (2 Kings 4:8)—it was Rosh Hashanah. Everywhere, *Va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day*, signifies Rosh Hashanah. *Va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day, that the sons of Elohim came* (Job 1:6)—it was Rosh Hashanah.[184]

"There are always two days. Why? So that Isaac will include Judgment and Compassion. Two days and not one; for if there were one alone, the world would be destroyed. Therefore it is written twice *Va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day*.[185]

"*The sons of Elohim came*—the great court, *sons of Elohim*, surely! Sons of the King, close to Him; and they decree judgment on the world.[186]

"*To present themselves* על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *over YHVH* (Job 1:6). Now, do they stand *over YHVH*? Rather, when these stand in judgment, the first judgment comprising all is: 'Who is it that fails to honor the name of the blessed Holy One, and that fails to honor the Torah and her servants?' So, too, 'Who is it that shows no respect for the honor of the Holy Name, to prevent it from being profaned on earth?

Who is it that disrespects His honor? Who is that fails to ascribe honor to this Name?'[187]

"*And Satan, too, came among them* (Job 1:6). *Too*—to amplify the meaning, including both him and his female. Similarly, *to present himself over* YHVH (ibid. 2:1)—for he also is concerned over the honor of this Name.[188]

"Here the ancient pillars of the world were divided. One said, 'Job was one of the pious of the nations of the world.' Another said, 'He was one of the pious of Israel, and he was struck in order to atone for the world.'[189]

"For one day, Rav Hamnuna encountered Elijah and said to him, 'Surely we have learned: "A righteous one who suffers…."'[190]

"[Elijah] replied, 'The judgments of the Master of the universe are fathomless. But when the blessed Holy One desires to purge the sins of the people, He strikes their arm and heals them all—like a physician who strikes the arm in order to save all the members of the body. As is written: *But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquities; he bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his wound we were healed* (Isaiah 53:5), as has been said.[191]

"On that day, when seventy thrones are set to render judgment upon the world, how many shield-bearing warriors and prosecutors stand on high—some inclining to the right for acquittal, others to the left for guilt: to recount sins of the world, sins of every single person! Therefore a person should declare his sins, each one just as it is; for if he does so, his case is tried by the King, the blessed Holy One, alone, and the entire court separates from him.[192]

"So one should declare the sins of every single limb and all that he has done in detail, as is written: *My sin I acknowledged to You and my iniquity I did not conceal. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to* YHVH*'* (Psalms 32:5). Afterward, *and You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah* (ibid.). How do we know this? From Moses, for it is written: *Moses returned to* YHVH *and said, 'Please, this people has*

committed a great sin, they made themselves gods of gold' (Exodus 32:31). And of Israel is written *We have sinned, for we have forsaken YHVH and served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth* (1 Samuel 12:10).[193]

"If you say, 'This applies to an individual but not to the community,' look, this [last] verse is written! And if you say, 'This applies to the community but not to their agent,' look at what is written: *Moses returned to YHVH* [*and said*,] ... *'They made themselves gods of gold'!*[194]

"Why is it that if a person declares his sin, the court separates from him? Because a person is considered his own relative and cannot be incriminated by his own mouth.[195]

"Furthermore, he leaves the prosecutor no room to argue for his guilt. One should anticipate by declaring his own defect, [231b] leaving no room for another to speak. Then the blessed Holy One forgives him, as is written: *One who admits and leaves off will be granted mercy* (Proverbs 28:13).[196]

"On the days of Rosh Hashanah, the court sets up a throne for the King, and He judges the whole world. Israel enters first to be judged, before wrath increases.[197]

"We have learned: *And justice for His people Israel day after day* (1 Kings 8:59). What is meant by *day after day*? Well, these two days of Rosh Hashanah. Why two days? Because they are two courts, joining as one: Upper Judgment, which is strict; Lower Judgment, which is lenient —both existing together.[198]

"Concerning this, these Babylonians do not know the mystery of יבבא (*yevava*), moaning, and ילולתא (*yelaluta*), wailing, and they do not know that both are necessary: *yelaluta*, wailing, which is strict Judgment; three תבירין (*tevirin*), broken sounds, lenient Judgment—like someone groaning weakly. They do not know, and they do both; we do know, and we do both; so all follow the true path."[199]

He opened, saying, "*Blast the shofar on the new moon*, בכסא (*ba-kese*), *on the covering, for our festival day* (Psalms 81:4). *Blast the shofar on the new moon*—what is meant by *on the new moon*? The court of lenient Judgment, who is called *new moon*.[200]

"*Ba-kese*—כס (*kes*), throne, of the upper world. *Kes*—Fear of Isaac, who is *kes*, throne for the supernal King. Further, *ba-kese*—strict Judgment, Fear of Isaac; Judgment that is always אתכסי (*itkesei*), concealed, for it is not revealed Judgment.[201]

"*For* חק (*ḥoq*), *a statute* (Psalms 81:5)—lenient Judgment. משפט (*Mishpat*), *A law* (ibid.)—strict Judgment with Compassion. Both of them are as one; so, two days, both in a single mystery.[202]

"*Happy the people who know* תרועה (*teru'ah*), *the blast. O YHVH, they walk in the light of Your presence* (Psalms 89:16). *Happy the people who know*—and it is not written *who hear. Who know the blast*: by virtue of the wise, who know through the air of the Holy Land, they know *teru'ah*, *the blast*—mystery of *teru'ah*, as is written: תרועם (*tero'em*), *You will smash them, with a rod of iron* (Psalms 2:9).[203]

"What nation is like Israel, who know supernal mysteries of their Lord—to come before Him and draw near to Him? All those who know the mystery of *teru'ah* may draw near, to walk in the light of the countenance of the blessed Holy One. This is the primordial light that the blessed Holy One has treasured away for the righteous. So one should know it.[204]

"It is written: יותרת מן הכבד (*yoteret min ha-kaved*), *lobe from the liver* (Leviticus 9:10), and it is written ואת היותרת על הכבד (*ve-et ha-yoteret al ha-kaved*), *and the lobe over the liver* (ibid. 3:4). *Yoteret min ha-kaved*, *Lobe from the liver—woman of whoredom* (Hosea 1:2), who comes forth *from the liver* to lure inhabitants of the world and denounce them, leaving the male to perform whoredom.[205]

“*Yoteret al ha-kaved, Lobe over the liver*—for she rules *over* her male. *The forehead of a whore* (Jeremiah 3:3), ruling *over the liver*, woman of strife and anger.

“*Min ha-kaved, From the liver*, she emerges to harm the whole world, to commit adultery with all. Afterward, she rises to the male—*the forehead of a whore*, brazenly—and then she is *al ha-kaved, over the liver*.[206]

“From within the liver and its lobe issues מרה (*marah*), bile, which is the sword of the Angel of Death, dripping those bitter drops to kill people, as is written: *In the end she is* מרה (*marah*), *as bitter, as wormwood, sharp* [*as a double-edged sword*] (Proverbs 5:4). [Bile] derives from the liver, and all fatal illnesses depend upon it.[207]

“On that day, it roams the world, gathering all sins of the world. And all of Israel are in distress, and they take a shofar to arouse [232a] that *teru’ah*, alarm, and *teqi’ah*, blast—strict Judgment with Compassion and lenient Judgment with Compassion. Then they are aroused similarly above, and all are sweetened with one another. Whatever that liver obtains, it offers to the heart, who is king, to judge. But the heart is not drawn to, nor does it desire, the foul deeds of its people. Rather, it obtains all that is pure and clear [232b]—all the merits and good deeds—whereas all that foulness and dirty filth it casts upon the other nations. Once the heart takes all those merits and good deeds—what is fittingly pure, choice, and clear—the liver takes all those sins and filthy dirty deeds, against its will, and casts them upon the other nations, as is written: *The goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities* (Leviticus 16:22). For so it is: once the heart takes all that is pure and clear, the liver takes all that is left—the filthy dirt and foulness—and casts it into all the other limbs, against its will.”[208]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “This path was prepared for me, to hear words of the Ancient of Days. Happy is the world in which

you dwell! Woe to the world, who will remain orphans, not knowing words of Torah fittingly![209]

"Certainly so! For the liver obtains all, good and bad. And although it roams and gathers all the sins of Israel, it likewise gathers their merits, in order to establish its slanderous informing. Everything, both this and that, it offers to the heart. And the way of the heart is to take nothing but the purest, choicest, and clearest of all, as you have said. The remaining dirty filth and foulness it returns to the liver, who absorbs all, against its will, as is written: *The goat shall bear upon it* [*all their iniquities*]. This matter I repeat, for it is sweet to my mouth like the sweetness of honey. Happy is my share, that I attained this and saw it with my own eyes!"[210]

He, too, opened, saying, *"O YHVH, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes raised high, nor do I pursue matters too great or too wondrous for me* (Psalms 131:1). David uttered this verse when he was walking on the bank of the river, and said, 'Master of all worlds, has there ever been a person in the world who thanked and praised You like me?'[211]

"A frog happened by, and said to him, 'David, do not be proud, for I have done more than you, since I offered my body at my Master's command, as is written: *The Nile will swarm with frogs* (Exodus 7:28)'—as has been established. 'Furthermore, I sing and praise night and day, never subsiding.'[212]

"At that moment, [David] said, '*O YHVH, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes raised high…*'

'*O YHVH, my heart is not high*—this pertains to the daily sacrifice, continually, to the blessed Holy One. For Assembly of Israel is thereby included among all [Her] cohorts, and all those rituals deliver Her from among the thorns.[213] [233a]

"Similarly with Israel. As long as they are hard-hearted, not opening with *teshuvah*, they do not emit fragrance; and

He does not deliver them from among the thorns—among other nations. When they open with *teshuvah*, they immediately emit fragrance, and He delivers them from among the thorns, and Assembly of Israel delights in them. As is written: *Open to me, my sister, my love* (Song of Songs 5:2)—for as long as the rose is closed, it has no fragrance and cannot rise from amid the thorns, but dwells among them, as has been said. And the blessed Holy One sent us to walk this path only for this: to learn these matters!”[214]

While they were sitting, an eagle came and descended and took one rose from among them and left. They said, “From here on, let us go on our way.” They rose and went on.[215]

Until here, the way of Rabbi Pinḥas and of Rabbi Shim’on. The latter went on along with Rabbi El’azar and the other companions, while Rabbi Pinḥas went with his companions.[216]

He opened, saying, “*For the leader, on* שושן עדות (*shushan edut*). מכתם (*Mikhtam*), *A mikhtam, of David, to teach* (Psalms 60:1). What is meant by *to teach*? To teach inhabitants of the world wisdom, as has already been established. *Shushan edut*—the Great Sanhedrin, of whom is written *hedged about* בשושנים (*ba-shoshanim*), *with lilies* (Song of Songs 7:3).

“*Mikhtam of David*—a sign that they showed to David when he sent Joab to Aram-Naharaim and Aram-Zobah to wage war against them, etc.”[217]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “This is *shushan edut*, for *Shekhinah* presides here over us, accompanied by supernal rungs and a holy company to offer praise. This is *shushan* in perfection, fittingly.”[218]

They rose and went on, these here and those there. Rabbi Pinḥas went on his way and spent the night in the village of Akimon along with Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yitsḥak.[219]

As they prepared to depart early, they sat waiting for the morning light. Rabbi Ḥiyya raised his eyes and saw

those stars of a flying scepter streaming along. He said, “Surely, many times I have asked about these stars.”[220]

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “These stars of a flying scepter are known by the understanding of the Companions. For the blessed Holy One created all those heavenly stars, great and small; and they all praise and glorify Him, as is written: *He counts the number of the stars* (Psalms 147:4). And when their time comes to shine, the blessed Holy One calls them by name, as is written: *He calls them each by name* (Isaiah 40:26). Then they run and extend a scepter of light joyously, praising their Master in the place where they were numbered, as is written: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these?* [*The one who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name*] (ibid.).”[221]

Meanwhile, dawn arrived. They rose and went on.

As they were going along, a great eagle came, circled over their heads, and remained above them.

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Surely, it is a time of favor! Now the Gates of Mercy are opened for all those on their sickbed, and this is a time of healing for them, even though they are prisoners of the King, for this eagle is a sign of mercy.”[222]

He opened, saying, *“Like an eagle rousing his nest, hovering over his fledglings…* (Deuteronomy 32:11). There is no creature in the world as merciful toward its young as the eagle. This has already been established, as is written: *The eagle’s young will devour it* (Proverbs 30:17), for he has mercy over his young. And since now is the time of mercy, this eagle has come and circled around us; for it is time, as is written: *O YHVH, in the morning You will hear my voice* (Psalms 5:4). This is the Morning of Abraham and his arousal.”[223]

Meanwhile, the eagle circled and passed ahead of them. Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Eagle, why are you with us? If you have come on a mission from your Master, here we are. If for some other sign, we are ready here.”

The eagle soared above and disappeared, and they sat down.

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “This matter of King Solomon is amazing. For we have learned: A great eagle used to come to King Solomon every day, and Solomon would ride on its wings, and it would carry him four hundred parasangs in a single moment. Where did it carry him? To Tarmod in the wilderness. (There is a certain place by the Mountains of Darkness called *Tarmod in the wilderness* [2 Chronicles 8:4]. This is not the place of the Tarmodians, but rather Tarmod that is in the wilderness, in the mountains, where all alien spirits and aspects gather. That eagle would fly there in a single moment.)[224]

“Having perched on that place, the eagle would raise itself, and Solomon would write a slip and cast it there, and he would be saved from those spirits. The eagle would gaze into the darkness of the mountains, to the site of Uzza and Aza’el, who are bound there by chains of iron thrust into the depths. (No one in the world is able [233b] to enter there—not even birds of heaven—only Balaam.)[225]

“Having gazed into the dense darkness, the eagle would swoop down, carrying King Solomon under its left wing. It would stand upon those chains and approach [Uzza and Aza’el]. Then Solomon would take out a ring—on which was engraved a holy name—and would throw it into the eagle’s mouth, and immediately they would tell Solomon whatever he wanted to know.

“From there Solomon discovered supernal wisdom, as is written: ויבן (*Va-yiven*), *He built, Tarmod in the wilderness, in the mountains* (2 Chronicles 8:4). Now, did he really construct a building in the mountains? Rather, what is meant by *va-yiven*? He perceived with understanding and knew that place, discovering there supernal wisdom, as is said: ויבינו (*Va-yavinu*), *They understood, the reading* (Nehemiah 8:8).”[226]

While they were sitting, the eagle suddenly came back to them with a single rose in its mouth, which it dropped in front of them, and flew away. They saw and rejoiced. Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Didn’t I tell you that this eagle came on a mission from its Master? This rose is the שושן עדות (*shushan edut*), *rose of testimony* (Psalms 60:1), that I mentioned, and the blessed Holy One has sent it to us.”[227]

He opened as before, saying, “*For the leader, on* עדות שושן (*shushan edut*). מכתם (*Mikhtam*), *A mikhtam, of David, to teach* (Psalms 60:1). *Shushan edut, A rose of testimony*—now, what testimony does *a rose* present? Well, this *rose* is testimony to the act of Creation, testimony to Assembly of Israel, and testimony to supernal unification.[228]

“Testimony to Assembly of Israel—because this שושנה (*shoshanah*), rose, has thirteen petals, all of them dependent on one root. It has five sturdy ones outside, covering this rose and protecting it. All in the mystery of wisdom.[229]

“Those thirteen are thirteen attributes of Compassion, which Assembly of Israel inherits from above, all connected to one root, which is Covenant, paradigm of Covenant—*Yesoda*, Foundation, of all.[230]

“Five sturdy ones surrounding it are fifty gates—five hundred years through which extends *Yesoda*, Foundation, Holy Covenant, Tree of Life.[231]

“Testimony to the act of Creation. The whole act of Creation consists entirely of words known through understanding and based on calculation. אלהים (*Elohim*), *God* (Genesis 1:1), of the act of Creation signifies above and signifies below—signifies above, in the mystery of the World that is Coming; signifies below, in the mystery of Assembly of Israel.[232]

“Rose of testimony, assuming all those signs. It is written: בראשית ברא אלהים (*Be-reshit bara Elohim*), *In the beginning Elohim created* (Genesis 1:1)—this is the rose. Thirteen petals are thirteen words until the second *Elohim*, namely תהום ורוח את השמים ואת הארץ והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני (*et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets ve ha-arets hayetah tohu va-vohu ve-ḥoshekh al penei tehom ve-ruaḥ*), *the heavens and the earth. And the earth was chaos and void, with darkness over the face of the deep, and the spirit of* (ibid., 1–2)—look, thirteen petals of the rose![233]

“Five sturdy ones surrounding Her—these are המים ויאמר מרחפת על פני (*meraḥefet al penei ha-mayim va-yomer*), *hovering over the waters. Said* (ibid., 2–3)—look, five others![234]

“Afterward, *Let there be light* (ibid., 3)—source and root of the rose, to which all are connected.[235]

“Testimony to unification. Five sturdy leaves, and the root and foundation, to which these thirteen petals are connected. שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה (*Shema yisra’el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—look, five leaves of the rose! אחד (*Eḥad*), *one*—source and root, to which all are connected; mystery of thirteen in calculation, the King’s signet ring.[236]

“Come and see: Corresponding to the rose is Israel. כשושנה (*Ke-shoshanah*), *Like a rose, among the thorns* (Song of Songs 2:2)—among the other nations; Assembly of Israel among other legions, appointed princes. As long as the rose remains closed, unopened, it has no fragrance and is not

lifted from among the thorns. When it opens, it emits fragrance, and then it is brought forth."[237]

Rabbi El'azar said to his father, "I have already heard about these closed organs in the mystery of sacrifice. What about the mystery of the other organs?"[238]

He replied, [234a] "El'azar, my son, all the other organs within constitute a sublime mystery.

"Come and see: The heart has already been discussed. But the heart is a blazing fire; and if the supernal King did not provide for it the lobes of the lung, bringing it a breeze of wind blowing from supernal spices, it would burn up the world in a single moment."[239]

He opened, saying, "*And YHVH rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire* (Genesis 19:24). Why did He burn them up? Because at that time כנפי (*kanfei*), the lobes of, the lung did not blow. This is the mystery of *Kanfei, The wings of, the dove are inlaid with silver* (Psalms 68:14)—namely, Raphael and Tsadqiel, of whom is said *He makes His angels winds* (ibid. 104:4), to blow constantly upon the heart."[240]

"The spleen." He opened, saying, "*I went back and saw all the torments that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power* (Ecclesiastes 4:1). Who are *the tormented*? These are babies at their mother's potent breast, who depart from the world by the hand of the Angel of Death. Now, does the Angel of Death kill them, tormenting them? Rather, the verse goes on to say, *On the side of their tormentors, power*. Who is that *power*? The one of whom is written *Let there be* מארת (*me'orot*), *lights, in the firmament of heaven* (Genesis 1:14), spelled deficiently. This is Lilith, appointed by that tormentor. She is called 'spleen,' and she goes and toys with babies, and afterward generates rage against them, causing tears to be shed over them.[241]

“The spleen follows the nature of the liver; the latter was created on the second day, the former on the fourth in the act of Creation. Consequently, there is no good omen on the second or the fourth—death of adults, death of little ones.[242] [234b]

“The maw is a rung that is one-sixtieth of death, called ‘slumber.’ Astirya—sixth rung of the Angel of Death. Since he comes from afar, he is on the side of death, though not death itself. The allusion is ‘one-sixtieth of death.’[243] [235a]

“The stomach. This obtains all and grinds and distributes in all directions below. From it are nourished those below, from those dregs below—all those alien spirits and aspects, who are nourished at night from those sacrificial limbs and fat. The rest is absorbed by all the bodily members. The liver obtains all and offers to the heart, as has been said. This corresponds to what is written: *on the right a lion’s face* (Ezekiel 1:10). Therefore the image of a lion appeared on the altar, devouring the sacrifices.[244]

“From here on, all the other organs in the mystery of the body, corresponding to the pattern above.[245] [235b]

“The trachea—six rings joined as one, and they are called בני אלים (*benei elim*), *sons of God* (Psalms 29:1), bringing forth wind to blow over the world, coming from the side of *Gevurah*. When they join as one, they are like a shofar—and are called שופר של איל (*shofar shel ayil*), a ram’s horn; אלים (*elim*), *rams, of Bashan* (Deuteronomy 32:14); *Grant to YHVH, benei elim, O sons of God!* (Psalms 29:1); *elim*, rams, of Isaac.[246]

“They bring forth breath and voice, and that voice issues and encounters rain clouds, and is heard outside. Thus it is written *The thunder of His might who can grasp?* (Job 26:14), for they come from the side of *Gevurah*, Might. What does that voice utter? *The voice of YHVH is over the waters. The God of glory causes to thunder. YHVH is over mighty waters* (Psalms 29:3). It is not written רועם (*ro’em*), *thunders*, but rather הרעים (*hir’im*), *causes to thunder*—by

benei elim, *sons of God*. And no one knows the praise of this voice, as is written: *who can grasp*?[247]

"The esophagus, swallowing the food, which from there enters all the limbs. This is the mystery of the rung of אישים (*ishim*), personages, *Ishim* draw near immediately, swallowing and absorbing entirely from אשא (*isha*), the fire; immediately, indeed—'given entirely to the *ishim*.' This is the mystery of אישי יהוה (*Ishei YHVH*), *The fire offerings of YHVH, and His estate they shall eat* (Deuteronomy 18:1)—these ones eat and swallow, whereas the others do not eat so.[248]

"All inhabitants of the world outside do not know how they eat nor their mystery, but the rungs within know and obtain from them. Surely, 'The esophagus cannot be examined from the outside,' since they do not know, 'but only from the inside'—they know and examine and obtain. Until it enters the mill and is ground and cooked, and the liver absorbs all, as has been said. From these *ishim* issue rungs that anticipate and obtain beforehand, and these are called 'grinders,' eating sacrifices and grinding. Therefore, ever since the Temple was destroyed, it is written *The grinders grow idle, for they are now few* (Ecclesiastes 12:3). These grind first. Once it has been ground, those who rule over them swallow and absorb, and they are called ושט (*veshet*), esophagus. Why? ו שט (*vav, shat*)—the shape of ו (*vav*) [236a] is bent; afterward שט (*shat*), it roams around, to eat, as is said: *The people* שטו (*shatu*), *would roam around, and gather* (Numbers 11:8) food to eat.[249]

"Drinking—wine and water, libation of water and libation of wine—entering this esophagus and absorbed by the lung. This is the seraphim, who by their flame imbibe drink and are called 'lung' in a single bond. All is absorbed within them.[250]

"All of these obtain what is fitting for each one of them. Ever since the Temple was destroyed, their form and their food have diminished, and there is no day without a curse."[251]

Rabbi Shim’on lifted his voice and said, “Woe to Jerusalem the holy city! Woe to the world, for all this goodness is lost! The images of mighty empowered princes have diminished.”

At this the Companions wept and said, “Woe, Rabbi, when you depart from the world! Who will reveal hidden, deep mysteries such as these, which have not been heard from the days of King Solomon until now? Happy is the generation that hears these words! Happy is the generation among whom you dwell! Woe to the generation that will be orphaned of you!”[252] [236b]

He opened, saying, “שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (*Shema yisra’el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH eḥad*), *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4). A large ע (*ayin*) and similarly ד (*dalet*); the mnemonic is עד (*ed*), witness, corresponding to what is written: *YHVH is* עד (*ed*), *witness, against you* (1 Samuel 12:5). The letters מ ש (*shin, mem*) remain, with an open מ (*mem*). Why? Closed ם (*mem*) is upper King; open מ (*mem*) is lower King. Other letters remain: א ח (*alef, ḥet*); *God’s honor is to conceal a matter* (Proverbs 25:2).[253]

“Rav Hamnuna Sava said: Whoever performs this unification every day encounters joy from above, through the mystery of these letters: מ ש (*shin, mem*) from this side, ח א (*alef, ḥet*) from that side. He permutes the letters, beginning in reverse and ending forward; your mnemonic is אשמח (*esmaḥ*), as is written: *As for me*, אשמח (*esmaḥ*), *I will rejoice, in YHVH* (Psalms 104:34)—*in YHVH*, precisely! This is the holy unification, and it is fine. So, too, in the Book of Enoch, which says similarly that whoever performs the unification every day encounters joy from above.[254]

“Furthermore, it includes: מ ש (*Shin, mem*), comprising a large ע (*ayin*)—seventy names of mystery of the holy Patriarchs.[255]

“ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה (*Yisra’el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH*—four compartments of tefillin, held by ח

א (*alef, ḥet*), the one who said, *Open to me*, אחותי (*aḥoti*), *my sister, my love* (Song of Songs 5:2). ד (*Dalet*) is the knot of tefillin, who is connected to them. A mystery for the wise, not to be revealed."[256]

Rabbi Shim'on fell silent. He wept—and laughed. He said, "I shall speak, for favor is found—and there will be no generation such as this until King Messiah comes, when they will be permitted to reveal.[257]

"Two straps emerge, from one side and from the other, mystery of two thighs of this א ח (*alef, ḥet*), to which prophets of truth are linked. For from above emerge two arms, from the right and from the left, and ד (*dalet*) is connected to them.[258]

"Then She descends; thighs extend below. Once She is connected above fittingly, She descends below, joining with Her cohorts. When She is connected, She is joined to the lower part of the thighs, and the insignia of י (*yod*), Holy Covenant, is upon Her from above. Then She merges in unification.[259]

"This י (*yod*) is mystery of Covenant. So whoever preserves this covenant is saved above and saved below. How do we know this? From Phinehas. Because he acted zealously for this covenant, he was saved from Judgment above and from judgment below. Consequently, this י (*yod*) was inscribed in him, as is written: פינחס (*Pineḥas*), *Phinehas, son of Eleazar* (Numbers 25:11).[260]

"This י (*yod*) must never be removed from the *tefillah* of the hand, so as not to cause separation. All its joy depends on this. This yod is in the Male, not in the Female; therefore it draws close to [the *tefillah*]. Whoever distances it from its place is distanced from the delight of the world that is coming.[261]

"In the Male is צדיק (*tsaddiq*), Righteous One—and She is צדק (*tsedeq*), Righteousness, without י (*yod*). He is איש (*ish*), Man; and She is אשה (*ishah*), Woman, without י (*yod*). Therefore, Her joy is to draw near it and to delight in it.

Whoever distances delight will be distanced from the delight on high. Concerning this is written *For those who honor Me will I honor*, [*and those who spurn Me will be disdained*] (1 Samuel 2:30).[262]

"Come and see: Phinehas confronted the harsh Judgment of Isaac and sealed the breach. Therefore, the mystery of יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), Isaac, consummated פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas. He stood in the breach, as is written: *Phinehas stood and prayed* (Psalms 106:30). He stood in the breach, confronting the Judgment of Isaac in order to defend Israel; and so, one is comprised in the other numerically.[263]

"Now, you might say, 'But counting depends only on Her eyes, whereas here counting pertains above, in Isaac!' Well, certainly so! For Isaac depends on, and is conveyed to, the place called 'eyes,' where judgments of all the world are rendered. For Her עי"נין (*aynin*), eyes, are those seventy thrones judging the world, called the Sanhedrin. So all is one, since they and Isaac go together, and all is fine.[264]

"פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas, is יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), Isaac. Phinehas stood and executed Judgment, clothing himself in harsh Judgment, which is the left. Thereby, from the left he attained the right; here, left is included in right.[265]

"*He turned away My wrath* (Numbers 25:11). What is meant by this? As soon as he saw that *wrath* spreading and extending from the side of Isaac, what did he do? He clothed himself and grasped that *wrath*—like someone [237a] grasping another and pulling him back.[266]

"Then he rendered judgment and executed judgment. He rendered judgment—based on the rule that if anyone copulates with a heathen woman, zealots can attack him. And he executed judgment, as is written: *He stabbed the two of them* (Numbers 25:8). Thus, השיב (*heshiv*), *He turned away, My wrath*. Here is written *heshiv*, *He turned away*, and there is written *heshiv*, *He drew back, His right hand* (Lamentations 2:3). Just as the latter implies 'back,' so does

the former imply ‘back.’ So the י (*yod*) of פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas, is the י (*yod*) of יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), Isaac, for it is all.”[267]

“מעל (*Me-al*), *From above, the Children of Israel* (Numbers 25:11)—for when he saw that *wrath*, he saw that it was descending upon the heads of Israel.[268]

“What did he see? He saw the letter מ (*mem*) flying in the sky—the sign of the Angel of מות (*mavet*), Death—seeking to join with the letter ו (*vav*) and the letter ת (*tav*). What did Phinehas do? Since he was clothed in Isaac, he then took that letter—snatching it away—and joined it to himself. As soon as the Angel of Death saw that Phinehas had snatched that מ (*mem*) for himself, he immediately turned back.[269]

“Why? Because when the heart of פינחס (*Pineḥas*), Phinehas, grew zealous, he clothed himself in יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), Isaac, and attained the value of ר ח (*resh, ḥet*), 208, which is the total of his name and similarly the total of יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*). As soon as he saw the letter מ (*mem*) flying in the sky, he snatched it and joined it to himself, immediately becoming ח מ ר (*resh, mem, ḥet*)—as is written: *He took* רמח (*romaḥ*), *a spear, in his hand* (Numbers 25:7). Whereas he had been ר ח (*resh, ḥet*), he became ר מ ח (*resh, mem, ḥet*).[270]

“For the letter מ (*mem*) was the original sign for Adam, establishing death upon the world, because this letter was flying over Adam’s head when, as is written: *She took* מפריו (*mi-piryo*), *of its fruit* (Genesis 3:6)—מ פריו (*mem, piryo*)—and it was waiting for ו ת (*vav, tav*). When, as is written, ותאכל ותתן (*va-tokhal va-titten*), *and she ate, and she gave*…ותפקחנה (*va-tippaqaḥnah*), *And* [*the eyes of the two*] *were opened* (ibid., 6–7), then death was established upon the world.[271]

“Phinehas now saw that letter מ (*mem*) flying over the heads of Israel. How did he see it? He saw the image of an open מ (*mem*) filled with blood. As soon as he saw it, he said, ‘This is surely a sign of the Angel of מות (*mavet*), Death!’ He immediately snatched it, pronounced over it the Explicit Name, and brought this letter down to himself. Whereas he had been ר ח (*resh, ḥet*), he became ר מ ח (*resh, mem, ḥet*)—as is

written: *He took* רמח (*romaḥ*), *a spear, in his hand*. Thus it is written מעל (*me-al*), *from above, the Children of Israel*.[272]

"*By zealously enacting My zeal* (Numbers 25:11)—for he acted zealously for the holy covenant, which they were joining to an alien domain.[273]

"*In their midst* (ibid.). What is meant by this? That he was proceeding right into many multitudes and myriads, surrendering himself to death in their midst. However, בתוכם (*be-tokham*), *in their midst*—בתוך מ (*be-tokh mem*), *in the midst of mem*; that zeal that he displayed was *be-tokh mem, in the midst of mem*.[274]

"Why מ (*mem*)? Because it is the sign of מות (*mavet*), death; it is the sign of forty lashes; it is the sign of four modes of death imposed by the Court. Ascending and descending, descending and ascending. Ascending to forty, descending to four. Descending from four—those four spirits diverging from within male and female of impurity, through whom four modes of death are imposed by the Court, ascending from there to forty. Thus, מ (*mem*), sign and implements of the Angel of מות (*mavet*), Death. This is what Phinehas took, displaying zeal בתוך מ (*be-tokh mem*), *in the midst of mem*. Consequently, *I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal* (Numbers 25:11).[275]

"Now, how can it be said that Phinehas turned back the wrath of the blessed Holy One, when it is written *Those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand* (ibid., 9)? If not even one of them had died, I would say *He turned away My wrath* (ibid., 11); but since all these died, what is meant by *He turned away My wrath, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel?*

"Well, certainly, elucidation of the matter! Woe to the person who damages his seed! Woe to one who does not preserve his seed fittingly! Perish the thought that even one of Israel died, except from the tribe of Simeon! When that mixed multitude came, they intermingled with the women of the tribe of Simeon—after they converted—and

engendered children, some of whom died in the incident of the [Golden] Calf, and some of whom died in the plague, while the others died here—those who remained—as is written: ויהיו המתים במגפה (*Va-yihyu ha-metim ba-magefah*), *The dead ones in the plague*. It is not written אשר מתו (*asher metu*), *the ones who died*, but rather *ha-metim, the dead ones*—they were already essentially *dead*.[276]

"Since all of that holy seed were vigilant, they were all counted, to show that not even one of them was missing. Thus it is written *I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*—implying that others were annihilated. Similarly, *He turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel*—but from others he did not turn it away. Therefore, Scripture indicates *from the Children of Israel*, and so the Children of Israel were counted as before, and the blessed Holy One joined them to Himself.[277]

"Similarly, in the incident of the Golden Calf it is written: [*About three thousand*] *of the people fell on that day* (Exodus 32:28)—all those were from the mixed multitude. And in order to demonstrate that they were not from the Children of Israel, what is written afterward? *Moses assembled the whole community of the Children of Israel* [*and said to them…,*] [237b] *'Take from yourselves an offering'* (ibid. 35:1, 5).[278]

"Come and see: At first it is written: *From every man whose heart impels him*, [*you shall take My offering*] (Exodus 25:2)—including all. Once that mixed multitude did this and some of them died, the blessed Holy One wanted to be reconciled with Israel. He said to them, 'Join together, all of you, to one side'—as is written: *Moses assembled the whole community of the Children of Israel*, by themselves. He said to them, 'My children, I want to dwell among you; My dwelling will be in your midst. So, *take from yourselves an offering—from yourselves*, not from anyone else. I do not want others to share partnership with Me nor with you.' Therefore, all of them were destroyed.[279]

“Here, too, they were from that bad stock. *The dead ones* (Numbers 25:9)—*the dead ones*, surely, and not from Israel! Therefore He counted them, as is written: שאו את ראש (*Se’u et rosh*), *Take up the head-count* (ibid. 26:2)—‘Raise their heads.’”[280]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Father, how fine that would be—if we didn’t find a contradiction against it.”

He said to him, “Speak, my son!”

He replied, “Look at what is written: ויצמד ישראל (*Va-yitsamed Yisra’el*), *Israel clung, to Baal-peor* (Numbers 25:3); and we have learned that Israel became attached to him like a צמיד (*tsamid*), bracelet, attached to a person’s arm when he adorns himself. So was Israel attached to Baal-peor.”[281]

He said to him, “El’azar, so it is: *Israel clung*. But I did not say that Israel was clear of that sin; rather, that they were clear of death, which did not prevail against them.”[282]

He said to him, “But look at what is written: *Take all the leaders of the people and impale them* (Numbers 25:4)!”[283]

He replied, “*The leaders of the people*, surely, and not *the leaders of the Children of Israel*! You should learn from the wording *the people*. Here is written *the people*, and there is written *The people saw… and the people assembled* (Exodus 32:1), [*About three thousand*] *of the people fell* (ibid., 28). But come and see: *Israel clung to Baal-peor*—and did not worship him. This is proven from the end of the verse, as is written: *The people ate and bowed down* (Numbers 25:2)—it is not written *Israel ate and bowed down*, but rather *the people*. Since it is written *Israel clung*, what is meant by *The people ate?* Well, that evil seed constituted the sin of Israel.[284] [238a]

“What is meant by *Israel clung to Baal-peor*? Come and see: It is not written *Israel clung* בבעל פעור (*be-va’al pe’or*), *within Baal-peor*, but rather לבעל פעור (*le-va’al pe’or*), *to Baal-peor*—they gave embellishment and power *to Baal-peor* unintentionally. Because the ritual of פעור (*Pe’or*) is למפער

(*lemiph'ar*), to expose, oneself and excrete in front of him boiling-hot excrement, and that worship gives him pleasure and strengthens him. Israel, upon seeing this, thought that it was scornful and disgraceful to him, since of idolatry it is written ‘צא (*Tse*), *Out!' you will call to it* (Isaiah 30:22). So, in order to scorn the idolatry, they exposed themselves unintentionally. For these, Phinehas made atonement, nullifying the plague, as is written: *He atoned for the Children of Israel* (Numbers 25:13)."[285] [239a]

According to the lot shall its inheritance be apportioned, whether many or few (Numbers 26:56).[286]

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *"I know that whatever God does will be forever. One cannot add to it and one cannot take away from it. And God has acted that they should fear Him* (Ecclesiastes 3:14). Now, regarding King Solomon, whose wisdom surpassed that of all inhabitants of the world—don't we know *that whatever God does will be forever?* And he says *I know*—something that no one else knows?

"But surely King Solomon's wisdom transcends that of all inhabitants of the world, and what he knew was not known by other human beings. Come and see: When any other artisan in the world forms something, he examines it and considers it once and twice, and then makes it. Afterward, he adds to it or takes away from it. Not so with the blessed Holy One: He generates His handiwork truly out of chaos lacking any substance, and it is really perfect, fittingly, not requiring anything to be added or taken away. Therefore it is written: *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31).[287]

"Furthermore, *Whatever God* יעשה (*ya'aseh*), *will do*—for the perfection of the world—*will* surely *be forever*…."[288]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "If so, what is meant by *And God has acted that they should fear Him?* Rather, we have learned

as follows concerning this verse, and it is a sublime mystery among the Companions: This verse should read *Whatever God* עשה (*asah*), *has done, will be forever*. What is meant by *Whatever God* יעשה (*ya'aseh*), *will do?* After all, it is written *That which was has already been, and what is to be already has been* (Ecclesiastes 3:15). Yet you say *Whatever God will do*?[289]

"However, this can inferred from another verse. It is written: *No eye has seen*, אלהים (*Elohim*), *O God, but You, what He will do for one who awaits Him* (Isaiah 64:3). The verse should read *what You did*, and *who awaits You*. However it is a supernal place, flowing forth, kindling all lamps on every side, called the World that is Coming. From it emerges one tree, [239b] to be watered and tended; and this tree is supreme and honored above all other trees, as has been established.[290]

"This World that is Coming, flowing forth, cultivates this tree constantly—watering and tending it actively, adorning it with crowns, not ceasing its springs from it forever and ever.

"Upon that tree depends faith, found there more than in all other trees; within it, vitality of all. Thus it is written *Whatever* יעשה האלהים (*ya'aseh ha-Elohim*), *the Elohim will do*, הוא (*hu*), *He, will be forever*—surely, *He* was, *He* is, and *He* will be. *One cannot add to Him and one cannot take away from Him*. Therefore concerning the Torah it is written *You shall not add to it and you shall not take away from it* (Deuteronomy 13:1), for this tree is the Torah. And this place is tended constantly by האלהים (*ha-Elohim*), *the Elohim. Ha-Elohim, The Elohim*, is *Gevurah*, infinite and unfathomable, as is said: *His understanding cannot be fathomed* (Isaiah 40:28) —*ha-Elohim*, not *Elohim*.[291]

"Therefore, *ya'aseh, will do*, constantly, like a spring whose waters do not cease for all generations. Consequently, it is written: והאלהים עשה (*Ve-ha-Elohim asah*), *And the Elohim has acted, that they should fear Him*—tending this

tree perfectly, until it grasps every side above and below, so *that they should fear Him*, and never exchange Him for a substitute for all generations."[292]

Rabbi Abba said, "You have surely spoken well! But one should examine further. At first, *ya'aseh, will do*; and afterward, *Ve-ha-Elohim asah, And the Elohim has acted*. What is the difference between them? Well, surely, *will do* constantly, tending that tree, its waters never ceasing for all generations. Afterward, *asah, has acted*. What is meant by this? Well, *asah, He has made*, another tree below it—and not *ya'aseh, He will make*, as with the former one. Because He made and prepared this lower tree, so that one who enters the upper tree will enter with permission: he will discover the lower tree and be afraid to enter unless he does so fittingly. For this is the doorkeeper—and is therefore called *Keeper of Israel* (Psalms 121:4). This lower tree *asah, He has made*, and it is nourished by the upper tree; so it is not written *ya'aseh, He will make*, but rather *asah, He has made*. Why? *That they should fear Him*, and not draw near, except for those who are worthy of drawing near, and no one else; and so that people should keep to the paths of Torah, not deviating to the right or to the left.[293]

"Come and see: Of this tree—in which all its forces settle—[David] said, *It is You who sustain* גורלי (*gorali*), *my destiny* (Psalms 16:5). What is meant by *gorali, my destiny*? This is the lot to which King David is attached. Thus it is written על פי הגורל (*al pi ha-goral*), *by the mouth of the lot* (Numbers 26:56). This is על פי יהוה (*al pi YHVH*), *by the mouth of YHVH—Moses died there al pi YHVH, by the mouth of YHVH* (Deuteronomy 34:5).[294]

"Happy is the share of those who engage in Torah day and night, knowing its ways! Every day they eat sublime food, as is said: *Wisdom keeps its possessors alive* (Ecclesiastes 7:12). For Torah on high is nourished from this place, as has been said. Of them is written *Behold, My*

servants shall eat, and you shall hunger … (Isaiah 65:13).”[295]

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, “*There was a sound from above the expanse that was over their heads; when they halted, their wings slackened* (Ezekiel 1:25). This verse has been established; but *There was* קול (*qol*), *a sound, from above the expanse—qol, a voice*, joined to this *expanse*, participating with it. This is זכר (*Zekher*), *A remembrance, He made of His wonders* (Psalms 111:4). That *expanse* stands over those living beings, and this is the *expanse* created on the second day to *divide water from water* (Genesis 1:6).[296]

“It has already been established that there are seven expanses higher and higher. Surely, ‘וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain, performs no function,’ for it has nothing of its own except for what it is given. The poor are linked to it, and this is the mystery written: *See, in my poverty I have laid aside for the House of my God* (1 Chronicles 22:14). Each morning this gathers in, and in the evening it brings forth—for at night it brings forth its forces in all directions, controlling those legions and cohorts; and in the morning it gathers them all in, conveying them into their compartments, and they rule no more, for morning absorbs them all, as is said: *To declare in the morning Your kindness, and Your faithfulness in the nights* (Psalms 92:3). This has already been established.[297]

“There is *qol, a voice*, above this *expanse*, from which this *expanse* is nourished. When this *voice* is aroused, none of those cohorts moves; they are permitted only to stand in place. Their legions approach and await the goodness flowing toward that *expanse*, through which they will be blessed. Therefore it is *above the expanse that is over their heads*.[298]

“Come and see: *Above the expanse over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire stone, image of a throne* (Ezekiel 1:26). *Like the appearance of sapphire stone—stone of Israel* (Genesis 49:24), and this is the mystery

written: *They would roll the stone…* (ibid. 29:3). One stone descended from above when Israel wanted to inherit the land, and on it was written גורל (*goral*), Lot. It would say, ‘This is for so-and-so, and this is for so-and-so.’ That stone descended from beneath [240a] the King’s Throne. Surely it is written *From there feeds the Stone of Israel* (ibid. 49:24). Therefore, על פי (*Al pi*), *By the mouth of, the lot shall its inheritance be apportioned* (Numbers 26:56).”[299]

Rabbi Yitsḥak and Rabbi Yehudah were traveling from Usha to Lydda. Rabbi El’azar encountered them; they ran after him, saying, “Surely we will run after *Shekhinah*!”[300]

When they caught up with him, they said, “Surely we will join you and hear something new!”[301]

He opened, saying, “*Listen to Me, you who pursue justice, you who seek YHVH* (Isaiah 51:1). *Listen to Me, you who pursue justice*—those who follow Faith, *you who pursue justice*, surely! They are the ones *who seek YHVH*. If you wish to know Faith and to grasp this *justice*, do not gaze at Her by Herself—like other inhabitants of the world, who thereby brought death upon themselves. Rather, *Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug* (ibid.).”[302]

Command the Children of Israel and say to them, “My offering, My food, for My fire offerings, My pleasing aroma, [*take care to offer to Me at its set time*]” (Numbers 28:2). It is written: *Does YHVH delight in ascent offerings and sacrifices as in heeding the voice of YHVH? For heeding is better than sacrifice, hearkening, than the fat of rams* (1 Samuel 15:22). It is not the blessed Holy One’s desire that a person should sin and then bring an offering for his sin; rather, an offering without sin is a שלים (*shelim*), perfect, offering—and is called שלמים (*shelamim*), offerings of well-being. Similarly, the perpetual offering, although it atones for sins.[303]

Rabbi Abba opened, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O God, You will not spurn* (Psalms 51:19). This verse has been established as meaning that for a person’s sins the blessed Holy One desires only *a broken spirit*. But people do not know what they are saying. I have heard as follows from the Holy Lamp: When a person is about to defile himself by his sins, he draws upon himself a spirit of impurity—which dominates that person, ruling over him as it wishes. That impure spirit is strengthened and empowered, controlling him as it wills. If the person tries to purify himself, they purify him.[304]

“When the Temple still existed, he would bring his offering—his entire atonement was suspended until he showed remorse and broke the pride of that spirit, humbling it. This is the breaking of that impure rung. When that spirit is broken and he brings his offering, it is accepted in favor, fittingly. But if that spirit is not broken, his offering is nothing—and is given to the dogs; for such an offering does not belong to the blessed Holy One, but is for the dogs. Consequently, *The* proper *sacrifices of God are a broken spirit*—that the impure spirit should be broken, ruling no more. So of one who breaks it fittingly, it is written *a spirit that goes and does not return* (Psalms 78:39)—that person can be assured that it will never return to him again, as is written: *and does not return*.[305]

“*A broken and crushed heart*—the man who is not arrogant and does not revel in worldly delights. *O God, You will not spurn*—he is held in honor by Him.

“*Command the Children of Israel*. What is meant by *command?* Idolatry. So that one will not enable himself to be defiled by an impure spirit, which is real idolatry.”[306]

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine*

with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers! (Song of Songs 5:1). This verse has been established; but there are six arrangements of sacrifice here, and all has been said."[307]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "El'azar, my son, it is fine that you began the matter. But you concealed it. Why?"[308]

He replied, "Because I saw something in the Book of Enoch and I learned."[309]

He said, "Tell us what you have seen [240b] and heard."

He said, "All is one entity. The blessed Holy One said this: *I have come into my garden*—because all offerings of the world, when they ascend, first enter the Garden of Eden, mystery of Assembly of Israel. How so? Initially, at the beginning of the sacrifice, when a person confesses his sins over it—and the slaughtering and sprinkling its blood upon the altar.[310]

"Now, one should examine: How do those holy spirits benefit from this? And what is the reason for sacrificing an animal? Wouldn't it be much better for a person to break that spirit and to turn back in *teshuvah*? What is the reason for slaughtering an animal and burning it in fire on the altar?[311]

"Well, it is a mystery! For there is an animal crouching on a thousand mountains, consuming a thousand mountains every day, all called *animals on a thousand mountains* (Psalms 50:10). Of this we have learned that there is an animal consuming animals. Of what do they consist? Of fire. And that animal licks them all up in a single swoop, as is written: *For YHVH your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God* (Deuteronomy 4:24). All the waters filling the Jordan in six years She turns into one gulp, as is written: *Calm while Jordan gushes into his mouth* (Job 40:23).[312]

"The secret of the matter I saw: that all these are the essence and element of these animals below, for the spirit of the animals spreads from them below, and that spirit is formed below in animals.[313]

“When a person sins, he brings an animal as a sacrifice, and that animal spirit ascends, returning to its place. All those belonging to this species approach, and that spirit spreads through them all, and they come and enjoy the fat and blood of that spirit’s garment—for it came from their side, by virtue of that spirit of theirs. They all derive enjoyment and nourishment, and become advocates for that person. It enters via the esophagus, as has been said. This is why an animal is offered as a sacrifice.”[314]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Blessed is my son to the blessed Holy One. Of you is said *Your father and your mother will rejoice; she who bore you will be glad* (Proverbs 23:25). *Your father* on high *will rejoice*; *and your mother*—Assembly of Israel. *She who bore you will be glad*—the daughter of Rabbi Pinḥas the Pious.[315]

“El’azar, my son, speak! This [explains] the sacrifice of an animal; what about the sacrifice of birds, as is written: *If his offering is an ascent offering of birds* (Leviticus 1:14)?”

He replied, “I have not seen, but from this topic of animals I perceive the topic of birds. But I will not speak, for I have not seen nor yet heard.”[316]

He said to him, “El’azar, you have spoken well. But the secret of sacrifices encompasses many secrets, and it has been entrusted as revelation only to the truly virtuous, from whom the mystery of their Master is not concealed.

“The secret of sacrifices is four images engraved on the Throne—the Throne of the Holy King—face of a bull, face of an eagle, face of a lion, face of a human, including all of them. All faces gaze at one another, included in each other—spreading in many directions and myriads, above and below, without measure, count, or number.[317]

“From the face of a bull spreads a spirit to grazing animals—to four species comprised in one, namely: oxen, sheep, rams, and goats, which are available for sacrifice. Since [the sacrifice] is from them—from those holy forces spreading from that face of a bull—they approach their

element and enjoy that element and their garment. If they had no element in this world, they would not approach there.[318]

"Just as Holy *Shekhinah* derives pleasure from the spirits of the righteous—drawing near the spirit of that righteous one and enjoying it, since that spirit derives from Her—so these enjoy their aspect and element, enjoying that garment that is offered up, since it is the garment of their spirit, so they enjoy it.[319]

"From the face of an eagle spreads a spirit to birds, and an eagle is on two sides. This is the mystery of ועוף יעופף (*ve-of ye'ofef*), *and let fowl fly* (Genesis 1:20)—two sides. Therefore it descends and spreads from the right and from the left.[320]

"Regarding the sacrifice of birds, the only ones offered from the pure side are pigeons and turtledoves, which are true to their mates [241a] more than all other birds—preyed upon but not preying—faithful to one another, the female to her mate; so the sacrifice is from them. And those holy spirits descend and draw near, enjoying their element and essence.[321]

"Now, you might ask, 'How can this pigeon or turtledove spread in many directions to cohorts without measure? Or similarly, a single animal?' Come and see a single lamp, by which the whole world is filled with light. Again, a thin stick kindles a log.[322]

"Until here, from two sides engraved on the Throne. Now it should be asked: There are four images engraved on the Throne, so why is there no sacrifice from the others? Well, surely there is sacrifice from all. A lion is engraved on the Throne—when the sacrifice is perfect, a lion descends and enters the fire, consuming and enjoying there. *Adam*, A human, is engraved on the Throne—*adam* is essence of all, offering there his spirit and soul, and supernal *Adam* benefits from lower *adam*. Each species draws near its own, benefiting from it—benefiting from its very own, from its element.[323]

“Now, you ask, ‘What about the lion, which has no element below in that sacrifice?’ Well, the lion is composed of them all, for it is from the right. So it consumes from all of them, whereas the others do not consume from its species, for it is the right.[324]

“Thus, all four images engraved on the Throne approach the sacrifice, so the sacrifice is complete. When these enjoy their element and essence, then a spirit descends to kindle supernal lamps.[325]

“The priest and Levites convey an element and essence to those supernal rungs of theirs, and each rung gives to its element. Four images on the Throne at first, as we have said, species corresponding to species; and they first approach, species to species. Face of a bull—all the faces spreading to those species, as we have said, all of them approaching their element and essence. Face of an eagle, as we have said. Lion, as has been said. *Adam*, A human, who offers his spirit and soul, approaches supernal *Adam*.[326]

“The priest, who unifies the Holy Name, approaches the supernal Priest—who enters the Holy of Holies, draws near, and kindles by His ritual a radiant countenance toward the priest below.[327]

“Levites, playing their instruments joyously—that side of theirs rejoices, its face shining.[328]

“Israel stands by the sacrifice in prayer, for their prayer is over all. Aroused toward them is Israel the Elder, the holy seal, His face shining.[329]

“Each species toward its own, each entity following its element and aroused—lower rungs and higher rungs—although all of them are aroused: rungs engraved on the Throne toward rungs on earth, their element; and those supernal rungs that are concealed all approach the meal, aroused. But none of them is permitted to stretch out a hand to the sacrifice until the supernal King eats and enjoys and gives them permission.[330]

“Afterward, once He has given permission, each one of them eats and enjoys fittingly, corresponding to what is written: *I have plucked my myrrh with my spice* (Song of Songs 5:1)—supernal rungs. *My myrrh with my spice*—right arm with left thigh.[331]

“*I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey* (ibid.)—Jacob with Rachel. ‘Now I have eaten fittingly!’[332]

“*I have drunk my wine with my milk* (ibid.)—left arm with right thigh.[333]

“Look, all the supernal rungs from which the supernal King derives enjoyment first! This is His food and His pleasure. First, the food of the supernal King. From here on, He gives permission to the four images engraved on the Throne and all those who spread out from them, to enjoy and eat—as is written: *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* (ibid.). *Eat, companions!*—the four images that we have mentioned. *Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—all those who spread out from them. All of them eat and enjoy fittingly, their faces shining, and all worlds are in joy. [241b] Every single one, whether higher rungs or lower rungs, approaches its element and enjoys. This is the mystery and secret of sacrifice properly.”[334]

Rabbi El’azar, Rabbi Abba, and all the Companions came and bowed down before him. Rabbi Abba said, “If the Torah had not been given on Mount Sinai, but instead the blessed Holy One had said, ‘Here, the son of Yoḥai is My Torah and My secrets!’ it would have sufficed for the world. Woe when you depart from the world! Who will illumine lamps of Torah? All will darken from that day on. For until King Messiah comes, there will be no generation such as this one, in whose midst Rabbi Shim’on dwells!”[335]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Based on this mystery, a person is forbidden to taste anything until the supernal King has eaten. What is meant by that? Prayer. A person’s prayer resembles this. First, one invites the images engraved on

the Throne over those creatures, all of whose spirits spread —birds and grazing animals for sacrifice, creatures whose spirits constitute an element of [those images]. This accords with: *How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom…* (Psalms 104:24)—creatures suitable for sacrifice, whose spirits spread upon them. Four images are invited over these creatures, corresponding to what we say: 'and the *ophanim* and holy *ḥayyot*,' along with all those other forces spreading from them.[336]

"Afterward, the high priest, who unifies the Holy Name —corresponding to 'With eternal love have You loved us….' The unification that he performs corresponds to: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4). Afterward, the Levites, who arouse melody, corresponding to: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands* (ibid. 11:13); *Take care, lest your heart be seduced* (ibid., 16). This is the melody of the Levites, in order to stimulate this side for this sacrifice. Afterward, Israel—'True and firm'; Israel the Elder, presiding over this sacrifice.[337]

"Thus, supernal rungs, innermost of all, preside over the table. But none of them is permitted to eat or to stretch out a hand to the sacrifice until the supernal King has eaten —that is, the first three blessings and the last three blessings. Once He has eaten, He grants permission to the four images, and to all those aspects spreading from them, to eat.[338]

"Then, this *adam*, human—who is an image comprising all other images—lowers himself and falls on his face, surrendering himself and his spirit to *Adam* who is engraved on those images, to arouse [*Adam*] upon him fittingly. This corresponds to: *To You, YHVH, I lift my soul* (Psalms 25:1).[339]

"Three other images and all those spreading from them. *A praise of David* (Psalms 145), namely: *they will utter, they will joyously sing, they will talk, they will speak* (ibid., 7, 11). All of them eat and enjoy, each one fittingly.[340]

“From here on, a person should express the distress in his heart. *YHVH will answer you on a day of trouble* (Psalms 20:2)—distress, like a pregnant woman in pangs of labor. For all of them are transformed into advocates on behalf of that person. Of this is written *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* (ibid. 144:15).”[341]

Rabbi Shim’on was traveling to Tiberias. Elijah met him. [Rabbi Shim’on] said to him, “Greetings, Master. What is the blessed Holy One engaged with in heaven?”[342]

He replied, “He is engaged in studying sacrifices and is saying new words in your name. Happy are you! I have come to greet you. And there is one thing I would like you to reconcile. In the Heavenly Academy a question has been posed: In the World that is Coming there is no eating or drinking, and yet it is written *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey*… (Song of Songs 5:1). How can one who neither eats nor drinks say *I have eaten my honeycomb, I have drunk my wine*?”[343]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “And how did the blessed Holy One reply to them?”

He answered, “The blessed Holy One said, ‘Let the son of Yoḥai speak!’ So I have come to ask you.”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “How deeply the blessed Holy One loves the Assembly of Israel! Out of the great love that He feels for Her, He changes how He normally acts. Even though He does not usually eat or drink, because of His love for Her He does eat and drink. Since He comes to Her, He does as She wishes.

“When a bride enters the nuptial chamber and wishes to eat, isn’t it right for the groom to eat with her, even though he is not accustomed to eating like this? As is written: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride*—since I have come to Her, entering the nuptial chamber with Her —[242a] *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey*.[344]

“We learn from David, who invited the blessed Holy One and changed the actions to which the blessed Holy One was accustomed, and the blessed Holy One accepted and did as he wished. [David] invited the King together with *Matronita*, as is written: *Arise, O YHVH, to Your resting place, You and the Ark of Your might!* (Psalms 132:8)—the King and *Matronita* as one, so as not to separate them.[345]

“He changed the vestments and changed the practices of the King, as is written: *May Your priests don righteousness, and may Your faithful sing for joy! For the sake of David*… (Psalms 132:9–10). *May Your priests don righteousness*—the verse should read *Your Levites*, since *righteousness* derives from the side of the Levites. וחסידיך ירננו (*Va-ḥasidekha yerannenu*), *And may Your faithful sing for joy*—the verse should read *And may Your Levites sing for joy*, since joy and song belong to the Levites. But he changed it and said *and may Your faithful*, who are from the right side.[346]

“The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘David, this is not My way!’

“David replied, ‘Master of the Universe, *For the sake of David Your servant, do not turn away Your anointed*—do not alter the arrangement that I have made.’

“He replied, ‘David, since you have invited Me, I should do as you wish and not as I wish.’

“From this we learn common courtesy: if one person invites another, that guest should do as the host wishes, even if he is unaccustomed to it.[347]

“Similarly, *He took of the stones of the place, which he placed at his head* (Genesis 28:11). Since the Groom came to the Bride—even though His custom was to lie down only on pillows and cushions, and She gave Him stones to lie on—He accepted it all wholeheartedly, as is written: *and he lay down in that place* (ibid.), on those stones, even though He was unaccustomed to it.[348]

“So, too, here: *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey*—even though this is not His custom, for the sake of love for the Bride. Nevertheless, only in the house of the Bride, not anywhere else. In His own place He neither eats nor drinks; in Her place He both eats and drinks, as is written: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride*.[349]

“The angels whom the blessed Holy One sent to Abraham did not eat or drink in their own place, but for the sake of Abraham they ate and drank.”[350]

[Elijah] said to him, “Rabbi, by your life! This very thing the blessed Holy One wished to say, but in order not to take credit for Himself in the presence of Assembly of Israel, He consigned it to you. Happy are you in the world, for your Lord prides Himself on you above! Of you is written *The righteous one rules the awe of God* (2 Samuel 23:3).”[351]

My offering, My food, for My fire offerings (Numbers 28:2). Rabbi Yehudah said, “In a sacrifice there is smoke, there is *aroma*, there is *pleasing*. Smoke is masters of wrath, as is written: *For then* יעשן אף יהוה וקנאתו (*ye’shan af YHVH ve-qin’ato*), *YHVH’s wrath and His jealousy shall smoke* (Deuteronomy 29:19). They enjoy smoke, and smoke is wrath in the nose. *Aroma* is those called ‘apples.’”[352]

Rabbi Abba said, “Like apples, as is written: *the aroma of your nose like apples* (Song of Songs 7:9).”[353]

One lamb you shall perform in the morning (Numbers 28:4). What is meant by *in the morning*? The Morning of Abraham, as is written: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3). How do we know that this morning is that of Abraham? Rabbi El’azar said, “From here: *The morning was light* (Genesis 44:3). It is not written *Morning was light*, but rather *The morning was light*—the primordial light created by the blessed Holy One in the act of Creation. Thus, *you shall perform in the morning—the* well-known

morning—and this sacrifice was offered corresponding to the Morning of Abraham.[354]

"The sacrifice at twilight—Isaac; it was offered corresponding to the Evening of Isaac. How do we know? As is written: *Isaac went out to meditate in the field as evening turned* (Genesis 24:63), which is the Evening of Isaac, as we have already established.[355] [244a]

"*And a tenth of an ephah* [*of semolina as a grain offering*] (Numbers 28:5). Why? Well, *a tenth of an ephah* corresponding to Assembly of Israel, who is *tenth* of the rungs and must be placed between two arms. She is *semolina*—bread; and since She is bread, no one is appointed over bread of the seven species but the blessed Holy One alone.[356]

"Therefore, if anyone shows contempt for bread and throws it on the ground, poverty pursues him. One official is appointed over this, and he pursues him, imposing poverty upon him. He will not depart from the world before being in need of others. Of him is written *He wanders for bread—where is it?* (Job 15:23). *He wanders* and goes roaming, drifting from place to place *for bread*, and no [244b] one cares for him, as is written: *where is he? Where is* one who has mercy on him? For such a person is nowhere to be found.[357] [246a]

"There are three who inflict evil upon themselves—two in this world and one in the other world. These are: One who curses himself—for we have learned: One official is stationed before a person, and when that person curses himself, this official and seventy others appointed under him seize that word and say 'Amen' and raise it on high and judge it. And [the official] pursues him until he actualizes and fulfills that word.[358]

"Whom do we have greater than Moses, who said, *And if not, please wipe me out from Your book that You have written* (Exodus 32:32)? And he said this from necessity. Yet although the blessed Holy One did what [Moses] wished,

even so, he was not saved from punishment; as has been said, he is not mentioned in the portion of the Dwelling, but was wiped out from there. This has already been established.[359]

"Whom do we have greater than King David, who said, *I said, 'I will guard my ways from sinning with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked is before me'* (Psalms 39:2)? What is meant by *as long as the wicked is before*? That official who is appointed over this and who seizes that word to harm the person.[360]

"Another—one who throws bread or bread crumbs on the ground, showing contempt for it, as has been said. These two, in this world.[361]

"Another, in that world—one who lights a lamp at the departure of Sabbath before Israel has reached the Hallowing of the Portion, because he desecrates the Sabbath and by [this] fire prematurely kindles the fire of Hell.[362] [246b]

"There is one place in Hell reserved for those who desecrate Sabbath. As soon as he kindles a lamp before its time—there is one official in Hell at the departure of Sabbath and he begins kindling that place and says, 'This is the place of so-and-so.' And all the wicked of Hell help to kindle that place. That official calls out, declaring, *YHVH is about to hurl you with a mighty hurl, winding you round and round* (Isaiah 22:17). And all the wicked of Hell exclaim, *A ball off to a vast land! There shall you die, and there shall be your chariots* [*of honor, O shame of your master's house!*] (ibid., 18). For he caused them to be burned before their time had arrived.[363]

"So these are three who inflict evil upon themselves, as has been said. [247a]

"*Semolina as a grain offering* (Numbers 28:5)—to bring this *semolina* before the supernal King *as a grain offering* between two arms.[364]

“*Mingled with beaten oil* (ibid.)—with that oil flowing forth from above.”[365]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Well spoken! But what is meant by *beaten*? Ah, it is a supernal secret. For since it is *oil*, why *beaten*? Mystery of conjugal union with the Female—conveying anointing oil to Her fittingly—is only when *beaten*; extracting it from olives, which are limbs of the body, and channeling that flow from above through every single limb is only when *beaten*.[366]

“Righteous One crushes [247b] crushingly, extracting from those supernal limbs—which are holy olives—anointing oil, with complete desire for the Female. If He does not crush, He will extract that oil only without desire of the limbs—and the Female does not enjoy that flow, and it is not fitting. Thus, *mingled with beaten oil*—to enjoy and be nourished.[367]

“*A fourth of a hin* (Numbers 28:5)—because She is fourth, fourth leg of the supernal Throne.[368]

“This is the perpetual ascent offering every single day. On Sabbath, doubly, since radiance and fullness are added fittingly, as has already been said.[369] [248a]

“ובראשי חדשיכם (*Uv-rashei ḥodsheikhem*), *On the heads of your new moons*, [*you shall present an ascent offering to YHVH*] (Numbers 28:11). Now, how many heads does the moon have? After all, the only head the moon has is the sun, which serves as Her head. However, *rashei, the heads of*—two every single month, namely Jacob and Joseph, who are renewed over the moon.[370]

“So, to renew Her—*two bulls from the herd* (Numbers 28:11). These the moon mentioned when She asked how they could wield Her as one, and She diminished Herself beneath them.[371]

“*And one ram* (ibid.)—the ram of Isaac. Now, where did Abraham go? Well, since Esau is aroused there, he withdraws, so that [Esau] will not see him. Who is that? שעיר

(*Sa'ir*), The goat, of the new moon. Since Esau—who is שעיר (*sa'ir*), *hairy* (Genesis 27:11)—is destined to be aroused there, [Abraham] withdraws and is nowhere to be found. Isaac is found there, for he feels love toward [Esau], like wine on its dregs. Jacob is found there, to break his face. Joseph, who is [Esau's] Satan, alongside Rachel.[372]

"*Seven lambs* (Numbers 28:11)—seven days of the moon.[373]

"בני שנה (*Benei shanah*), *Offspring of a year* (ibid.)—offspring of the moon, who is called *shanah, year*, for She is one of those Primordial Years.[374]

"*And three-tenths* [*of semolina*] (Numbers 28:12)—Her first three rungs, each of which is ten, corresponding to the pattern above. *Tenths*—one part in ten.[375]

"*And a goat* חטאת (*ḥattat*), *as a sin offering* (Numbers 28:15). Why is it called *ḥattat, a sin offering*? Because it is *ḥattat, a sin*, and from the side of *sin*."[376]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Yet we have learned that it is written ליהוה (*la-YHVH*), *to YHVH* (ibid.). [248b] Well, it is surely offered *la-YHVH, for YHVH*, for it is written: *to effect purgation* (ibid., 22)—to break the face, so that he will not approach the Sanctuary. They give this portion to Samael, and he eats it and does not eat the other sacrifices. This is for him alone, no one else sharing it with him. With this portion, he enjoys the banquet of the King; so he delights and separates from Israel and does not accuse them.[377]

"Were it not for the diminishment of the moon, they would not give him anything from the King's banquet. Now, what does he have to do with the diminishment of the moon? Well, because he approaches and suckles and draws power for his people from within the left side of the moon and is thereby strengthened. Yet on account of this goat, he separates entirely, deriving enjoyment from this. And because the blessed Holy One diminished the moon, they bring an offering to Samael so that he will separate from Her and not approach the Sanctuary. Thus we have

learned: ‘Bring an atonement for Me.’ ‘For Me’—‘on account of Me, because I diminished Her. Because of Me, you need this.’[378]

“We have found in the Book of Enoch that he said: Just as on the first of the month, when the moon is purified to approach Her Husband, one portion must be given to the Other Side from its own kind, so, similarly, a woman must give one portion of that kind when she is purified to approach her husband.[379]

“What is that portion? Her fingernails with their filth and a little from the ends of her hair, wrapping them together—and then that Evil Side will not follow her to harm her, but will separate from her in every direction.

“What should she do with those hairs and nail clippings? After wrapping them together, she must place them where no one passes by, or in deep holes in her yard, concealing them there.”[380] [249a]

In the first month (Numbers 28:16).[381]

Rabbi Abba opened, “*As a hart craves for streams of water, so my soul craves for You, O God* (Psalms 42:2). This verse has been established. But it is written איל (*ayyal*), *hart*, and it is written אילת (*ayyelet*), *hind* (Psalms 22:1); and all is one, for there is male and female. Even though there is male and female, this *ayyal, hart*, is called ‘male’ and is called ‘female,’ as is written: כאיל תערוג (*ke-ayyal ta’arog*), *as a hart craves*, and it is not written יערוג (*ya’arog*), [*he*] *craves*.[382]

“And it is written אילת (*ayyelet*), *the hind of, dawn* (Psalms 22:1). What is *the hind of dawn?* Well, this is a certain compassionate animal, more compassionate than any in the world—for when She needs food, She goes afar on a distant journey and brings back food, and does not want to eat until She returns to her place. Why? So that the other animals may gather by Her and She can share that food with them.

When She comes, all the other animals gather by Her, and She stands in the middle, distributing to each one. By what She distributes, She is satisfied, as if She had eaten more than all.[383]

"When does She distribute to them? When morning is about to come—while it is still night, and darkness lifts, lightening. Once morning shines, they are all sated with Her food.

"Then a voice is aroused in the middle of the sky, proclaiming aloud: 'You who are near, enter your places; you who are far, depart! Let each one be gathered to his appropriate place.'[384]

"As soon as the sun shines, each one is gathered to his place, as is written: *When the sun rises, they gather…* (Psalms 104:22). She goes in the day, is revealed at night, and distributes in the morning; so She is called *ayyelet, the hind of, dawn*. Afterward, She is invigorated like a warrior and goes—and is called *ayyal, a hart*.[385]

"Where does She go? She goes sixty parasangs from the [249b] place that She left, and enters the Mountain of Darkness, where She catches the scent of food. She proceeds into that Mountain of Darkness, and a certain tortuous serpent catches the scent of Her foot and follows Her; and She climbs from there toward the Mountain of Light. Once She arrives there, the blessed Holy One summons for Her another serpent, who emerges and attacks the other one, and She is saved. From there She takes food, and returns to Her place at midnight. She begins to distribute until the darkness of morning lifts. Once the day dawns, She goes and is no longer seen, as has been said.[386]

"When the world needs rain, all the other animals gather toward Her, and She ascends to the top of a high mountain, and, wrapping Her head between Her knees, She lets out one low after another. And the blessed Holy One hears Her voice, and is filled with mercy, and takes pity on

the world. She descends from the top of the mountain, and runs and hides Herself, and all the other animals run after Her, but do not find Her—as is written: *As a hart craves for streams of water*. What is meant by *for streams of water?* For those that have dried up, and the world is thirsting for water; so *she craves*.[387]

"When She is pregnant, She is stopped up. When the time comes for Her to give birth, She lows and cries out, cry after cry—up to seventy cries, equaling the number of words in *May YHVH answer you on the day of distress* (Psalms 20:2), which is the song for a pregnant woman. The blessed Holy One hears Her and is ready for Her: He brings forth a great serpent from the Mountains of Darkness, and it comes through the mountains, its mouth licking the dust. It reaches this *hart* and comes and bites Her twice in that place.[388]

"The first time, blood comes out, and it licks it up. The second time, water comes out, and all those animals of the mountains drink, and She is opened and gives birth. Your mnemonic is: *He struck the rock with his staff twice*; and it is written *and the community, with its beasts, drank* (Numbers 20:11).[389]

"At the moment when the blessed Holy One takes pity on Her—through the act of this serpent—what is written? *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of hinds…* (Psalms 29:9). *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of hinds*—those pangs and pains, arousing those seventy cries. Immediately, *and strips the forests bare* (ibid.)—to remove that serpent, exposing it among them to go away. *And in His palace* (ibid.). What is meant by *and in His palace*? In the *palace* of the blessed Holy One, all those throngs open, saying, *Glory*. What is meant by *Glory? Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His place* (Ezekiel 3:12).[390]

"*In the first month* (Numbers 28:16.). What is *the first month?* The month in which this animal is revealed and

empowered, going forth into the world.[391]

"*On the fourteenth day* (ibid.). *On the fourteenth*—the other animals, who are ten on each side, in four directions of the world.[392]

"On the first side, it is ten—and one on each side, in four directions, making four. Once those four conjoin and are arranged with those ten on the right side, there are fourteen joyously arraying this animal in Her adornments."[393]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Certainly so! Come and see: It is written *Draw and take yourselves sheep for your families and slaughter the Passover offering* (Exodus 12:21). *Draw*. What is meant by this? Like someone drawing from another place to here. *Draw* higher days to lower days. Higher days are 366, [250a] the numerical value of משכו (*mishkhu*), *draw*. Lower days are usually 355, but when the moon shines in fullness, those days mount up to 365, the numerical value of משכו (*mishkhu*), minus one.[394]

"*Draw* higher days to lower days, so that they will all be as one, in a single bond. And who draws them? Those ten on the right side, as is written: בעשור (*Be-asor*), *On the tenth* (Exodus 12:3). *Be-asor*—the verse should read בעשרה (*ba-asarah*), *on the tenth*; why *be-asor*? Well, there are nine in each direction with one point going in the middle, and that point completes the decade. So, בעשור (*be-asor*)—as is said: שמור (*shamor*), *Keep* (Deuteronomy 5:12); זכור (*zakhor*), *Remember* (Exodus 20:8); ב (*be*), to apply ten to those nine days by means of this point.[395]

"לחדש הזה (*La-ḥodesh ha-zeh*), *Of this month* (Exodus 12:3)—days on the right side, in order to join זאת (*zot*), this, with זה (*zeh*), this, so that all will be one.[396]

"On the day when those four that are linked to four sides join with them, then that animal gives birth, and the serpent goes away. At that time this animal is sanctified on high and is called Glory. Then the festival is sanctified. Whereas until here, She was not Glory, now She is called

Glory—as is written: *And in His palace all says 'Glory'* (Psalms 29:9).[397]

"Who is *His palace*? An inner, upper palace, where all is sanctified. There whoever is worthy of sanctification is sanctified. How is She sanctified in that palace? First, gates are opened. One concealed key is prepared, opening one gate on the southern side. Then the High Priest enters that opening, girds Himself with His sash and His adornments, is arrayed in a crown of holiness, dons the breastpiece, the ephod, the robe of seventy bells with pomegranates, the medallion of the holy diadem on His forehead—adorned with eight garments, forty-two letters flashing and sparkling upon Him, and that whole palace shines with supernal lights.[398]

"That key turns and opens another gate to the north. Then Levi enters—tithe of Jacob, set aside for the blessed Holy One—and with Him a ten-stringed harp, and He is adorned with His crowns.[399]

"Then the key turns and opens in that palace a certain gate, the gate standing in the center. The column on the eastern side [250b] enters, and is adorned with seventy crowns, adorned with four letters, which are twelve, adorned with engravings of 270,000 worlds, adorned with crowns from one end of the world to the other, with numerous garments of glory, with numerous holy crowns.[400]

"That key turns and opens all hidden gates, all holy concealed gates, and He is sanctified in them, standing there as King. He is blessed with numerous blessings, adorned with numerous crowns. Then they all emerge in unison, adorned with their crowns fittingly.[401]

"Once they emerge, Levi is aroused with His finery; and this animal is aroused, diminishing Herself out of love of song. How does She diminish Herself out of love of song? She diminishes Herself little by little until She becomes a single point. Once She has diminished Herself in song, of

then is written *A man went from the house of Levi and took a daughter of Levi* (Exodus 2:1)—surely, from the left side. How does He grasp Her? He extends the left hand under Her head, out of love.[402]

"Now, you might ask, 'Since She is a single point, how can He grasp such a tiny point?' Well, regarding what is above, the smaller something is, the more praiseworthy—this is its virtue, its sublime greatness.

"Immediately, the High Priest is aroused and grasps and embraces Her. If She were large, She could not be grasped at all; but since She diminished Herself, becoming a single point, She is grasped and raised on high. Once She is raised and sits between these two sides, that column standing in the center unites with Her—with loving kisses, in a single passionate bond. Then, *Jacob kissed Rachel* (Genesis 29:11)—with passionate kisses, cleaving to one another inseparably, until She receives Her soul blissfully, as is fitting.[403]

"When She receives Her soul of delights and wishes to attend to Her cohorts, they all gather and call Her from the holy palace: 'Glory, Glory in the holy palace!' Father and Mother open, saying, 'Sanctified.'[404]

"Then the new moon is sanctified fittingly. Of then is written *In the first month* (Numbers 28:16)—*first*, surely! Thus, *Draw*… (Exodus 12:21). And so, *On the tenth* לחדש הזה (*La-ḥodesh ha-zeh*), *of this month* (ibid., 3)—for the moon is joined with the sun. Whereas She was a single point, as She descends, She expands little by little and fills out, becoming full in every direction, fittingly adorned."[405]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Why is the Passover offering a lamb? Well, because it is written *If we sacrifice the abomination of Egypt* (Exodus 8:22). What is meant by *the abomination of Egypt*? Now, could it be that because they despise it the verse reads *the abomination of Egypt*? Rather, the Egyptians' deity and god is called *the abomination of Egypt*.

Thus it is written *like the abominations of those nations* (Deuteronomy 18:9)—the gods of the other nations.[406]

"Come and see the wisdom of Joseph, as is written: *From among all his brothers he took five men* (Genesis 47:2), and he taught them to say *Your servants are shepherds, we and our fathers as well* (ibid., 3). Now, would a king ruling over the whole land and a father to the king do such a thing, making his brothers despicable [251a] and disreputable to them? But surely, *the abomination of Egypt* is what their deity and god was called. Thus it is written *If we sacrifice the abomination of Egypt*…."[407]

"Joseph said, 'The best of the land is the land of Rameses, and that land they have set aside for their gods, to graze and wander to their hearts' delight; and all the Egyptians esteem those who shepherd their gods as their very gods. I will enable my brothers to inherit that land, so the Egyptians will bow down to them and esteem them fittingly.' This accords with what is written: *For every shepherd is an abomination to Egypt* (Genesis 46:34)—they esteem them as their gods."[408]

Rabbi Yose said, "But we have learned: 'Just as the blessed Holy One will punish idolators, so will He punish the idols themselves.' Now, did Joseph make his brothers into idols?"[409]

He replied, "Joseph didn't make his brothers into idols, but rather into rulers over the Egyptians' idols, subduing their gods, chastising them with a rod. Joseph said, 'If my brothers rule over their gods, they will certainly rule over the Egyptians themselves!' That is why he settled them in the best of the land, giving them control over all the land.[410]

"So, why is the Passover offering a lamb? Well, because the lamb was the deity and god of Egypt. The blessed Holy One said, 'From the tenth of the month, take the Egyptians' deity and seize it, and let it be bound and held in your

custody for one, two, three days. And on the fourth day, bring it out to be judged and assemble against it.'[411]

"When the Egyptians heard the voice of their deity, held in Israel's custody, and they could not rescue it, they wept, and it was as hard on them as if they themselves had been bound for slaughter. The blessed Holy One said, 'Let it be held in your possession day after day for four days, so that they will see it captured; and on the fourth day bring it out to the field forum to be killed, and let the Egyptians see how you execute judgment on it.' This was harder on them than all the plagues that the blessed Holy One had inflicted upon them—those judgments that they executed on their deities.[412]

"Afterward, they punished it [251b] with fire, for it is written: *The images of their gods you shall burn in fire* (Deuteronomy 7:25). The blessed Holy One said, *Do not eat of it raw* (Exodus 12:9)—so that [the Egyptians] will not say, 'Out of craving for our deity, they are eating it like this.' *Nor cooked* (ibid.)—for if it is cooked, it will be concealed, and [the Egyptians] will not see it. Rather, it should be prepared so that they see it being burned in fire, so that its odor will spread.[413]

"Furthermore, its head bent over its shanks—so that [the Egyptians] will not say that it is a different animal or something else; rather, they will recognize it as their deity. Further, they should not eat it ravenously, but rather on a full stomach, showing disgrace and contempt.[414]

"Further, *No bone shall you break in it* (Exodus 12:46)—rather, [the Egyptians] should see its bones cast into the street and be unable to save it. Thus it is written [*Upon all the gods of Egypt I will execute*] *judgments* (Exodus 12:12)—many judgments.[415]

"Further, *your staff in your hand* (Exodus 12:11)—and not a sword or spear or any other weapon of war."[416]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "It has already been established that the Egyptians worshiped the constellation Aries, and

that is why they worshiped a sheep."[417]

Rabbi Yose said, "If so, they should have worshiped a lamb and not a sheep."[418]

He replied, "They worship them all. Actually, the constellation Aries descends and ascends, as a lamb and as a sheep; so they worship them all."[419]

He said to him, "I have heard as follows: that all cattle were their deity, and so the blessed Holy One killed *all the firstborn of the cattle* (Exodus 12:29). As has been said, these are rungs on high, who are called so."[420]

Rabbi El'azar said, "It is written: *Nothing* מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *that is leavened, shall you eat* (Exodus 12:20); and it is written חמץ (*Ḥamets*), *Leavened stuff, shall not be eaten* (ibid. 13:3). Well, the latter is male, and former is female."[421]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "El'azar, my son, of the former is written *Nothing… shall you eat*, whereas of the latter is written *shall not be eaten*. Why isn't it written [of the latter] *you shall not eat?* Well, the female, who perverts her ways—by warning, surely! The male, who is more attached, by a thread of purity—by request."[422]

Rabbi El'azar said, "But Father, look at what is written: *You shall not eat ḥamets, leavened stuff, with it* (Deuteronomy 16:3)!"[423]

He replied, "Out of honor, Scripture adds extra words. But initially, by request: *shall not be eaten*; and afterward by warning.[424]

"The harsher of the two of them: מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *what is leavened*. Why? Because the smell of death is there. מחמצת (*Maḥmetset*)—totality of male and female: male, חמץ (*ḥamets*), *leavened stuff*; female, whose *feet descend to* מות (*mavet*), *Death* (Proverbs 5:5), found at the beginning and end of the word. Consequently, she hastens the death of anyone who eats leavened bread on Passover; and he should know that he is doomed to die in this world and in

the world that is coming. Thus it is written *That soul will be cut off* (Exodus 12:19).[425]

"מצה (*Matsah*)—why? Well, we have learned as follows: שדי (*Shaddai*)—because He said to the world, 'די (*Dai*), 'Enough!' However: because משדד (*meshadded*), He destroys, those evil sides. And for this quarrel that He makes with them, chasing them away from all dwellings of holiness, He is called מצה (*Matsah*)—as is said: מסה ומריבה (*Massah u-Mrivah*), *Testing and Quarreling* (Exodus 17:7)."[426]

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "*Rebuke the beast of the reed, the herd of bulls among calves of the peoples* (Psalms 68:31). *Rebuke the beast of the reed*—the beast clinging to the wicked Esau.[427]

"*The reed*—we have learned that on the day that King Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, Gabriel came and thrust a reed into the Great Sea, upon which was built the metropolis of Rome. What is *the reed*? The male of this wicked *beast*, [252a] who has a small aspect in the unity of holiness. This is the reed that [Gabriel] thrust into the Great Sea, on account of which she rules the world; and of this dominion is written *Reed and rush will wither away* (Isaiah 19:6). *Reed*—dominion and head over all kingdoms. Furthermore, *reed*—for the blessed Holy One eventually will break him like a reed.[428]

"Come and see: In Egypt she reigned, and from her issued many kinds of dominion, all in the mystery of חמץ (*ḥamets*), *leavened stuff*. Once the blessed Holy One broke her, He removed חמץ (*ḥamets*) and brought in מצה (*matsah*). How? By the thinnest thread of all, He broke the ח (*ḥet*), and those letters turned into מצה (*matsah*). Actually, He broke the ח (*ḥet*) of this חיה (*ḥayyah*), *beast*, who is called חמץ (*ḥamets*). So she is called חית (*ḥayyat*), *beast of, the reed*, for she is as easy to break as a reed. How was she broken? By a thread as thin as a hair, He broke the ח (*ḥet*); it was displaced, becoming מצה (*matsah*). Thus it is written *Rebuke* חית (*ḥayyat*),

the beast of, the reed—the blessed Holy One rebuked her, and the ח (*ḥet*) was broken, turning into ה (*he*).[429]

"One day the blessed Holy One will break that קנה (*qaneh*), *reed*, in this manner: He will break its foot, so remaining will be הנה (*hinneh*), *behold*—as is written: הנה (*Hinneh*), *Behold, YHVH Elohim comes in might, and His arm wins triumph for Him; hinneh, behold, His reward is with Him*, ופעולתו (*u-ph'ullato*), *and His recompense, before Him* (Isaiah 40:10). What is meant by ופעולתו (*u-ph'ullato*), *and His action, before Him*? This is the פעולה (*pe'ullah*), action, performed on that letter ק (*qof*), breaking it; and that *pe'ullah*, action, is *before Him*—He will remove its foot, so it becomes הנה (*hinneh*): *The first* [*shall say*] *to Zion*, 'הנה (*Hinneh*), *Behold, here they are!' And to Jerusalem I will send a herald* (ibid. 41:27)."[430][253a]

On the day of First Fruits, when you bring an offering of new grain to YHVH in your Festival of Weeks, a holy convocation shall you have (Numbers 28:26).[431]

Rabbi Abba said, "*The day of First Fruits*—who is *the day*? The river issuing from Eden, who is a day of those supernal *First Fruits*. This is the one on whom Torah depends, and He generates all mysteries of Torah; and since He is the Tree of Life, the fruit of trees must be brought."[432][253b]

Rabbi Shim'on opened with a verse, saying, "*Lift up your heads, O gates! Rise up, eternal portals, that the King of glory may enter* (Psalms 24:7). This verse has been established and discussed. However, *Lift up your heads, O gates!*—supernal gates, gates of sublime understanding, namely fifty gates.[433]

"*Your heads*—who are those heads? Well, every single one has a head—extending, entering one another, intermingling.

“I have found in the Book of Enoch: שאו (*Se’u*), *Lift up, O gates!*—gates below the Patriarchs, namely the last three. *Your heads*—heads of the clans of Israel; supernal Patriarchs, who are the heads of those gates. And since these are *ofanim*, wheels, whirling and carrying them on their backs, [the Psalmist] says, ‘*Se’u, Carry, O gates!*’ *Carry* whom? *Your heads*, who are heads over you, controlling you.[434]

“*Rise up, eternal portals*—the Matriarchs, who are four below.[435]

“*That the King of glory may enter*—supernal King of all, who is King of that *glory*, illumining the moon. Who is He? *YHVH Tseva’ot*. *That He may enter*—which place? To bring the Torah into the Ark, in a single bond fittingly. Once this one enters His place, Torah enters the Ark, and a single bond is bound; supernal Torah unites with Oral Torah, [254a] explaining concealed matters.[436]

“When? בשבועותיכם (*Be-shavu’oteikhem*), *In your* [*Festival of*] *Weeks*—according to your reckoning. For whenever Israel makes calculations for new moons and festivals, the blessed Holy One sets up a pulpit within the heavens and issues a proclamation: ‘Behold, My children below have sanctified the month—or, have sanctified the festival. Sanctify yourselves, all of you above.’ He arranges that all the powers of heaven become sanctified together with the Holy People, and all of them as one keep a single observance. Thus, *be-shavu’oteikhem*, *in your weeks*, which you count during those seven weeks.[437]

“Then the blessed Holy One conveys a flow of seven rungs below into that rung united with those seven. Now, you might say, ‘But there are six, and no more!’ Well, Mother is then sitting upon the fledglings, crouching over them, and we get Her to fly away, and we take those six children along with this rung below—fulfilling the verse that is written: *Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself* (Deuteronomy 22:7).[438]

“Rav Hamnuna Sava said, ‘On this day, Israel takes only five children, who are the five books of Torah.’[439]

“Now, you might say, ‘There are six!’ Well, really, there are seven, counting one bird found between the wings of Mother.[440]

“The people of Israel know how to hunt for great and precious game. What do they do? They draw out that bird from beneath the wings of Mother by murmuring of the mouth, whispering toward Her again and again. And that bird loves those murmurings and those sounds that they whisper to Her. Although She is beneath the wings of Her Mother, She raises Her head, gazes toward that whispering sound, and flies to them, emerging from beneath Her Mother’s wings.[441]

“As soon as the people of Israel receive Her, they hold Her tight, whispering to Her, binding Her in a bond so that She will not fly away. They immediately grasp that bond, and She tries to fly off but cannot get away. While that bond is in their hands, they whisper with their voices and She chirps along with them, [254b] flying up and descending.

“When all those Sons beneath the wings of their Mother hear the chirping of their Sister—that bird—and that whispering sound, they immediately emerge from beneath their Mother’s wings and fly toward that bird, and the people of Israel take them and grasp them. Were it not for that bird whom they grasp at first, [the Sons] would never fly to them and they could not grasp them.[442]

“How do they capture this holy bird? They prepare precious food for Her joyously with all sorts of delights, entering the synagogue and house of study—chirping to Her, whispering to Her softly, fittingly. And She, concealed beneath Her Mother’s wings, raises Her head and sees prepared tables, with chirping toward Her fittingly; She emerges and flies to them, as has been said, with all those Sons grasping Her.

“They send off the Mother who is crouching over them, and She goes away. Because from the seventh heaven and above—‘What is concealed from you, do not explore or search.’ Send it off, for you will not be able to comprehend. Of this is written *Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself, so that it may go well with you and you will prolong your days* (Deuteronomy 22:7).[443]

“מקרא קדש (*Miqra qodesh*), *A calling of holiness* (Numbers 28:26)—קריאה (*qeri’ah*), a calling, and chirping produced for that holy bird at first. Once the other days grasp Her, they are called מקראי קדש (*miqra’ei qodesh*), *callings of holiness* (Leviticus 23:4). This bird is called קדש (*qodesh*), *holiness*, as is written: *for she is qodesh, holiness, to you* (Exodus 31:14). And since She is *holiness*, She calls all of them, and they come to Her; so they are called *miqra’ei qodesh, called by holiness*.[444]

“She calls, and the people of Israel chirp along with Her and call, too; so they come to them and they grasp them. Therefore it is written: *These are the appointed times of YHVH, miqra’ei qodesh, called by holiness, which you shall call* (Leviticus 23:4)—by your chirping and by that holy bird, *qodesh*, calling them.[445] [258b]

“*You shall present an ascent offering to YHVH* (Numbers 28:27). Come and see: Concerning *Pesaḥ* it is written *You shall present* אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering, an ascent offering to YHVH* (ibid., 19), whereas here it is not written *isheh, a fire offering*. Concerning this day, *isheh, a fire offering*, is not mentioned; rather, *You shall present an ascent offering*. Why?[446]

“This day is the day when the Bride enters the canopy, leaving all aspects of evil, having observed days of purification fittingly. This is the mystery of ‘The King tastes the flavor of a virgin.’ Therefore concerning [*Shavu’ot*] it is not written אשה (*isheh*), for another one did not approach the

sanctuary, but rather was distanced from there. Thus there are no אישים (*ishim*) here, nor should there be, and Israel is distanced from the Evil Side, having counted days of purification—days and weeks—and having been absorbed into days of purification."[447]

Rabbi Abba said, "We still need to open this entrance."[448]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "I raise my hands in prayer to the One who created the world. This secret we have found in the books of the ancients: אישים (*Ishim*) are in the middle, coming on this side and on that side—clinging to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, clinging to evil and clinging to good. Therefore, on other days, כליל לאישים (*kalil la-ishim*), entirely to the fires, and of them is written אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering, an ascent offering* (Numbers 28:19); but on this day, when the Tree of Life prevails and no other, we do not need *ishim*, and they should not be there. This is the day of the Tree of Life, not of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Consequently, *You shall present an ascent offering to YHVH* (Numbers 28:27), not *isheh, a fire offering, an ascent offering*. And *an ascent offering* must be brought under its own name, as has been said. And we have already aroused the meaning of *bulls from the herd* (ibid.) and that whole sacrifice.[449]

"*In the seventh month* (Numbers 29:1)—as has been said: the day of Rosh Hashanah and judgment of the whole world, harsh Judgment and lenient Judgment.[450]

"ועשיתם (*Va-asitem*), *And you shall make, an ascent offering* (ibid., 2). *Va-asitem, And you shall make*—the verse should read והקרבתם (*ve-hiqravtem*), *and you shall present*, as on all the other days. What is meant by *va-asitem, and you shall make*? Well, on this day is written ועשה (*va-aseh*), *and make, me a delicious dish* (Genesis 27:4). Israel makes many delicious cooked dishes on this day, while the Accuser goes searching for sins of the world. Therefore it is not written

ve-hiqravtem, *and you shall present*, but rather *va-asitem*, *and you shall make, an ascent offering*—and not *isheh*, *a fire offering, an ascent offering*. Similarly, in all the other sacrifices it is not written *isheh*, *a fire offering*, since they have no share in all these days—certainly not on this day, when we make delicious cooked dishes without the Other Side being aware, for Isaac sends him to hunt the game of the sins of inhabitants of the world and to bring it to him.[451]

"While he is proceeding, Israel takes advice from Rebekah and performs all those rituals, all those prayers—they prepare a shofar and blow it in order to arouse Compassion. As we have already established, *He brought him wine and he drank* (Genesis 27:25)—bringing it from afar, from the site of ancient wine; and he drinks and finds it delicious, and delights and bestows many blessings upon him and forgives his sins.[452]

"What is written? *When Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau came in from his hunt* (Genesis 27:30)—bearing many burdens, as has been said, and we have already established the matter.[453]

"So it is a day of blasting, and the sacrifice is an ascent offering. *One ram* (Numbers 29:2)—as has been said, because of Isaac's ram. *And one goat* (ibid., 5)—a bribe for Samael, to assuage him for that weeping that he wails on this day, once he sees that his will has not been done and that he hunted game for nothing, as has been said. Similarly, on Yom Kippur, as has been written in *Parashat Emor el ha-Kohanim*."[454]

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month… (Numbers 29:12).[455]

Rabbi Abba opened, "*The ark came to rest in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat* (Genesis 8:4). Come and see: During

all these days, Mother hovers over Her children so that the Other One will not prevail over them and so as to save them. Once Her children have been saved and are sitting in *sukkot*, they are securely protected. On the first and second days, She commands Israel to prepare a feast for the princes of other nations, and She Herself does not dwell there. From the third day, which is the seventeenth day of the month, She begins to settle over them, as is written: *on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of* אררט (*Ararat*), *Ararat*—mountains pervaded by all kinds of curses and hexes."[456]

Rabbi El'azar said, "On the first day of the Festival, She does not settle over them, nor on the second day. On the third day, increasing and decreasing, She settles over them—increasing letters and decreasing the sacrifice, as is written: עשתי עשר (*ashtei asar*), *eleven* (Numbers 29:20). This is fitting for a stingy one, evil-eyed. Because on the first day and the second day Her children rejoice and they distribute their spoil to them; from the third day on, when She settles over them, what is written? *And the waters continued diminishing until the tenth month; on the first day of the tenth month, the mountaintops appeared* (Genesis 8:5). [259a] *The waters continued diminishing*—the sacrifices, continually decreasing; and just as they decrease, so does their benefit."[457]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "El'azar, my son, come and see: From the second day, waters began to appear. Once they began, from the third day She settled over them.[458]

"The Babylonians did not know why those waters are designated here, since, after all, Israel's benefit does not belong in a place of decrease, but rather in a place of increase. Because these waters that are designated here decrease, Scripture comes to inform us, as is written: *And the waters*—the ones known from the days of the Festival, the ones designated among the sacrifices for those mountains of curses—*continued diminishing*: their benefit

and the flow drawn upon them *continued diminishing*. And because those waters belong to them, letters do not combine, so that their benefits will not combine, but rather be little by little.[459]

"But for Israel, who are from the blessed Holy One, what is written? *Those who seek YHVH lack no good* (Psalms 34:11). The verse begins: *Lions suffer want and go hungry*—the princes of other nations. *Those who seek YHVH*—the people of Israel—*lack no good*; rather, they continually ascend higher and higher. Consequently, their benefit—namely, *the waters—continued diminishing*.[460]

"*Until the tenth month*—Tevet, for then are the days of evil; and that evil is aroused and empowered, and the holy Bride is not illumined by the sun. Then, *the mountaintops appeared*—those Mountains of Darkness, Mountains of Curses, appearing and empowered, inflicting evil upon the world in these days.[461]

"אשה (*Isheh*), *A fire offering* (Numbers 29:13) concerning that ascent offering, for then they devour their portion.[462]

"There are seventy bulls, corresponding to seventy princes ruling over seventy nations—ascending on the first day and descending with each passing day. They are called 'goring bulls' on their days.[463]

"אילם (*Eilim*), *Rams* (Numbers 29:13)—spelled deficiently. There are fourteen—the mnemonic is יד יהוה (*yad YHVH*), *the hand of YHVH* (Exodus 9:3), the hand controlling them—two every single day.[464]

"*Yearling* (ibid.) lambs—their total, ח״ץ (*ḥet, tsade*), ninety-eight.[465]

"Now, you might say, 'If so, we are being evil-eyed toward them.' Yes, for it is written: *For you will be heaping live coals on his head* (Proverbs 25:22). But we give only joyfully, because throughout the days of the year there is no joy such as on these days. And since we give out of the goodness of our hearts and with joyous intention, it turns into *live coals* on their heads, flaming coals. Our joy brings

them harm: יד יהוה (*yad YHVH*), *the hand of YHVH*, and ח״ץ (*ḥet, tsade*), ninety-eight—such is their total sum. All this has been said.[466]

"Now, you might say, 'Who appointed us to bring offerings for them? Maybe they don't want all this.' Well, the joy among all those princes for all those bulls, rams, and lambs [offered during the rest of the year] does not compare to this—when Israel provides them with these banquets. Nevertheless, all is offered to the blessed Holy One alone; they approach there, and He distributes to them.[467]

"Thus it is written *If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread* (Proverbs 25:21)—those sacrifices of the Festival. *If he is thirsty, give him water to drink* (ibid.)—the waters designated here on the days of the Festival: on the second, sixth, and seventh days. Your mnemonic is as is written: לו בו״ז יבוזו (*Boz yavuzu lo*), *They would surely scorn him* (Song of Songs 8:7).[468]

"*Many waters cannot quench love* (ibid.)—those waters that Israel pours out as a libation on the Festival, joyously and lovingly, to the blessed Holy One.

"*Nor rivers sweep it away* (ibid.)—rivers of pure balsam, all of which join and intermingle with this love.[469]

"*If a man offered all the wealth of his house* (ibid.)—Samael. *For love* (ibid.)—of Israel, to have a share with them in those waters designated here in this section.[470]

"*They would surely scorn him* (ibid.). The mnemonic for those *waters* is בו״ז יבוזו לו (*Boz yavuzu lo*), *They would surely scorn him*—undoubtedly, for they are all considered by us as a broken potsherd that can never be repaired.[471]

"Their waters are distributed on the days of בו״ז (*bet, vav, zayin*), two, six, seven. Remaining are the other days, namely the third, fourth, and fifth. Your mnemonic is חרש (*ḥeres*), *a potsherd, among potsherds of the earth* (Isaiah 45:9)—they cannot be restored with us, nor ever.[472]

“Now, you might ask, ‘What about the first day?’ Well, it is not called *first* nor *one*, but simply *the fifteenth* (Numbers 29:12), with no further designation. However, the first designation of days is from the second day—fittingly so, since there is no *good* on the second day. Therefore, neither *first* nor *one* is indicated at all, and it is simply [*the fifteenth*]; and the designation of days begins with the second day. Waters are distributed on בו״ז (*bet, vav, zayin*), two, six, seven; and they remain on the days of חר״ש (*ḥet, resh, sin*), as has been said, all fittingly.[473]

“Happy is the share of the people of Israel, who know [259b] how to enter the kernel of the nut! In order to enter the kernel, they break these shells and enter.[474]

“What is written after all this? *On the eighth day, you shall have* עצרת (*atseret*), *a convocation* (Numbers 29:35). They have penetrated all these shells and broken many chunks—killing many serpents and scorpions threatening them in those Mountains of Darkness, until they found a place of habitation and a holy city surrounded entirely by walls. Then they entered Her, to bring pleasure there and to delight in Her. We have already established the matter: This is עצרת (*atseret*), *A convocation*—כנישין (*kenishin*), gathered; a place where all is gathered together. *You shall have—you* and no one else, so that you may delight in your Lord, and He in you. Thus it is written *Delight in YHVH, and rejoice, O you righteous; sing gladly, all upright ones!* (Psalms 32:11).”[475][260a][476]

פרשת ואתחנן

Parashat Va-Eṯḥannan

“I PLEADED” (DEUTERONOMY 3:23–7:11)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, *“Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to* YHVH (Isaiah 38:2). Come and see how potent is the power of Torah, how supreme above all! For whoever engages in Torah does not fear those above or those below, nor any evil mishaps in the world, since he grasps the Tree of Life and eats from it every day.[1]

“For Torah teaches a person the true path, advising him how to return to his Lord, nullifying that decree. Even if it has already been ordained against him, it is totally annulled and withdrawn from him, no longer looming over him.[2]

“The advice one should follow in this world is to engage in Torah day and night, never departing from her, as is written: *Meditate on it day and night* (Joshua 1:8). If one departs from Torah or separates from her, it is like separating from life.

“Come and see! Here is the advice for a person when he climbs into bed at night: he should accept upon himself wholeheartedly the Kingdom on high and deliver to Him in advance the pledge of his soul. This has already been established. For the whole world tastes the taste of death, since the Tree of Death prevails in the world, and all human spirits depart, ascend, and are delivered to it. Because they are given in pledge, they all return to their places.[3]

“Come and see: When the north wind awakens at midnight, and a herald comes forth, the blessed Holy One is

aroused in the Garden of Eden to delight with the spirits of the righteous. Then all sons of *Matronita* and all members of the palace devote themselves to praise the Holy King, and all those pledges of spirits that were delivered to Him are returned to their owners. Most inhabitants of the world awake at that time, since all the pledges are with them; and those members of the supernal palace stand at their stations, engaging in the praise of Torah until daybreak, participating with Assembly of Israel.[4]

"Then, when morning comes, She and all members of the palace approach the Holy King; and they are called members of the King's palace, children of the blessed Holy One, as has already been established.[5]

"When morning comes, one should cleanse himself in every way and gird his weapons to engage with the Holy King. For in the night he engaged with *Matronita*; now he comes with *Matronita* to couple Her with the King.[6]

"He comes to synagogue, purifies himself with offerings, chants the praises of David—with tefillin on his head and tzitzit on his hem—and recites *A praise of David* (Psalms 145), as they have established.[7]

"He offers prayer before his Lord. During the prayer he should stand like the heavenly angels, participating with them, for they are called *standing ones*, as is said: *I will let you move about among these standing ones* (Zechariah 3:7). And he should focus his intention before his Lord and submit his request.[8]

"Come and see: When a person rises at midnight from his bed to engage in Torah, a herald stands above him, proclaiming: *Here, bless YHVH, all you servants of YHVH, who stand in the house of YHVH by night!* (Psalms 134:1). Now when he stands in prayer before his Lord, that herald stands over him, proclaiming, *I will let you move about among these standing ones*.[9]

"After he concludes the prayer, standing in counsel before his Lord, they have already established that he

should surrender his soul with a willing heart to the required place, etc.[10]

"How much good advice a person receives regarding all! [260b] When prayer is concluded, all those words that a person generated with his mouth during that prayer ascend on high and split the heavens, until they reach the place that they reach, adorning the head of the King, fashioned into a crown.[11]

"As the Companions have established, when a person presents a prayer to the blessed Holy One, he should intend his prayer as supplication. How do we know this? From Moses our master, as is written: *I pleaded with YHVH* (Deuteronomy 3:23), for that is a superb prayer.[12]

"Come and see: Whoever stands in prayer should straighten his legs, as they have established, and he should cover his head like one sitting before the king, and cover his eyes so as not to look at *Shekhinah*.[13]

"In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava it says, 'If a person opens his eyes during prayer, or does not lower them toward the ground, the Angel of Death comes upon him prematurely. And when his soul departs, he will not gaze upon the radiance of *Shekhinah* nor will he die by a kiss. Whoever slights *Shekhinah* is himself slighted at the moment that he needs Her, as is written: *For those who honor Me will I honor, and those who spurn Me will be disdained* (1 Samuel 2:30)—this is one who looks at *Shekhinah* while he is praying.'[14]

"But how can he look at *Shekhinah*? Rather, he should realize that *Shekhinah* is surely before him, as is written: *Hezekiah turned his face to* הקיר (*ha-qir*), *the wall*... (Isaiah 38:2)—for there dwells *Shekhinah*. Consequently, nothing should interpose between him and the wall, as has been established.[15]

"Whoever stands in prayer should first arrange the praise of his Lord and afterward submit his request. For Moses our master first said, *You Yourself have begun* [*to*

show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in the heavens and on the earth who could do like Your deeds and like Your power?] (Deuteronomy 3:24), and afterward, *Let me, please, cross over and see* [*the good land that is across the Jordan*] (ibid., 25)."[16]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Why is it written here first אדני (*Adonai*) and then יהוה (*YHVH*), which we pronounce as אלהים (*Elohim*)? Well, the sequence is so, from below to above, and to combine the quality of day with night, and of night with day, coupling all as one fittingly.[17]

"*You Yourself have begun to show Your servant*.... What beginning is here? Well, surely, Moses was a beginning in the world, being totally complete. Now, you might say, 'Jacob was complete—and the tree was completed below corresponding to the pattern above.' But what Moses attained, no other human attained, for he was adorned more consummately: with many thousands and myriads of Israel, with Torah, with the Dwelling, with Levites, with tribes and princes appointed over them.[18]

"He was completed with the whole body: Aaron on the right, Nahshon son of Amminadab on the left, he himself between them. Therefore, *Your greatness*—on the right: Aaron. *And Your mighty hand*—on the left: Nahshon. This has already been said. So Moses was a beginning in the world.[19]

"Now, you might ask, 'Who is the conclusion, since Moses is the beginning?' The conclusion is King Messiah, for then there will be perfection in the world, which has not been so for all generations. At that time, perfection will prevail above and below, and all worlds will be coupled as one. Of then is written *On that day YHVH will be one and His Name one* (Zechariah 14:9)."[20]

YHVH said to me, "Enough for you! Speak no more [*to Me of this matter*]" (Deuteronomy 3:26). Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "The blessed Holy One said to Moses, '*Enough for you*, that you coupled with *Shekhinah*. From here on, *no more*.'"[21]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "*Enough for you*, with the radiance of the sun that you possessed; *no more*—for the time of the moon has arrived, and the moon cannot shine until the sun is gathered in. But, *Command Joshua and imbue him with strength and courage*… (Deuteronomy 3:28)—you who are the sun must illumine the moon, as has already been said."[22]

You, cleaving to YHVH your God (Deuteronomy 4:4). Rabbi Yose said, "*Happy the people who has it so!* (Psalms 144:15). Happy is the people whom the blessed Holy One has chosen from among all peoples, elevating them as His share and bestowing upon them His blessing, the blessing of His Name, as is written: *They are seed YHVH has blessed* (Isaiah 61:9)—*YHVH*, truly![23]

"Come and see: All other peoples of the world the blessed Holy One has given to appointed princes who rule over them; whereas Israel the blessed Holy One has grasped as His share, to actually unite with Him, and He has given them the holy Torah in order to unite with His Name. [261a] Thus, *You, cleaving to YHVH—to YHVH*, and not to some appointee, as with other nations. This has already been established in many places."[24]

YHVH spoke to you from the midst of the fire. A voice of words you heard… (Deuteronomy 4:12).[25] Rabbi El'azar said, "This verse should be examined. קול דברים (*Qol devarim*), *A voice of words*—who is *a voice of words*? Well, *a voice* that is called דבור (*dibbur*), Speech, for all speech depends on it. Thus it is written וידבר אלהים (*Va-ydabber Elohim*), *God spoke* (Exodus 20:1), since speech

depends on this place, and this is called *a voice of words*.[26]

"*You heard*—for hearing depends only on this, since hearing depends on speech. So, *you heard*. As they have already established, *His master shall pierce his ear with an awl* (Exodus 21:6), because he damaged the place called 'hearing,' which is both speech and hearing.[27]

"*An image you did not see—only a voice* (Deuteronomy 4:12). What is meant by *an image*? As is said: *The image of YHVH he beholds* (Numbers 12:8).[28]

"Alternatively, *an image*—an inner voice, which was not seen at all. *Only* another *voice*, which we have mentioned. *An image*—why is it called so? Because the whole configuration of the body issues from it.[29]

"Now, you might say, 'Another is also called so.' Yes, for from this other one issues the configuration below. Therefore, upper ה (*he*), lower ה (*he*). Upper ה (*he*) is *a mighty voice, unceasing* (Deuteronomy 5:19), whose springs never stop. All those voices were there when Torah was given to Israel, all issuing from that inner voice, since the word depends on it.[30]

"That which is called *Mishneh Torah*, the Repetition of Torah, was uttered by Moses from his own mouth, and we have already established the matter. Why so? Well, supernal Wisdom is called the totality of Torah, from which issues all through that inner voice. Afterward, all settles, joined to the place called the Tree of Life—upon which depend the general and the particular, Written Torah and Oral Torah. It is called *Mishneh Torah*, Double Torah.[31]

"At first, *Gevurah*, unceasing; now, all as one. So here in these Ten Commandments, all is inscribed with ו (*vav*): תנאף ולא (*ve-lo tin'af*), *And you shall not commit adultery* (Deuteronomy 5:17); ולא תגנוב (*ve-lo tignov*), *And you shall not steal* (ibid.); ולא תענה (*ve-lo ta'aneh*), *And you shall not bear* [*false witness*] (ibid.); ולא תחמוד (*ve-lo taḥmod*), *And you shall not covet* (ibid., 18); ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit'avveh*), *and you shall not desire* (ibid.), as has been established."[32]

Rabbi Yose said, “What is meant by ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit’avveh*), *and you shall not desire*, when it is already written ולא תחמוד (*Ve-lo taḥmod*), *And you shall not covet*, since the latter should suffice?”[33]

He replied, “Happy are the masters of truth! Coveting is one rung, desire another. Coveting—if he can, he proceeds to take it; because of that coveting he feels, he goes to commit the act. Desire is not so, for even if he does not take the path, [he has still violated the commandment]. All this has been established by the Companions.”[34]

Rabbi Yose said to him, “Why isn’t it written ולא תרצח (*Ve-lo tirtsaḥ*), *And you shall not murder*, like these other ones?”[35]

He replied, “Because Judgment depends on *Gevurah*, not on the place of Compassion; so לא תרצח (*Lo tirtsaḥ*), *You shall not murder* (Deuteronomy 5:17) is not written with a ו (*vav*). Since five ווין (*vav*s) are needed, one is added in ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit’avveh*), *and you shall not desire*, for in לא תרצח (*Lo tirtsaḥ*), *You shall not murder*, no ו (*vav*) should appear, so it is added here.”[36]

Rabbi Pinḥas, who was sitting behind him, heard. He kissed him, and wept and laughed. He said, “Cub and lion—none can stand before them! Who in the world can stand before him and his father? Happy is the share of the righteous! Happy is my share in this world and in the world that is coming, that I attained this! Of this is written *The righteous shall see and rejoice* (Job 22:19).”[37]

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*You go near and hear all that YHVH our God says*… (Deuteronomy 5:24).[38]

“Come and see: When the Torah was given to Israel, all those voices were present, with the blessed Holy One sitting on the throne; and one was seen within another, the utterance of each issuing from within the one above it. This is the mystery written: *Face-to-face YHVH spoke with you on the mountain* [*from the midst of the fire*] (Deuteronomy 5:4), for the utterance issued and spoke from the midst of

fire and flame, which thrust it forth by the force of wind and water—empowering fire, wind, and water from within the shofar, which contains them all. And Israel drew back from this frightening experience.[39]

"ואת תדבר (*Ve-at tedabber*), *And it is you who will speak, to us* (Deuteronomy 5:24)—'We do not want supreme power from above, but rather from the place of the Female, no further!'

"Moses said, 'You have surely weakened my power and weakened another power.' For if Israel had not distanced themselves and had heard that entire [261b] utterance as at first, the world would have been indestructible and they would have endured for countless generations.[40]

"Because the first time, they died—for so it had to be, due to the Tree of Death. After they revived and rose, and desired to enter the Tree of Life—which stands above the Tree of Death—so that they would endure forever, they drew back, unwilling. So Moses' power over them was weakened, and another power was weakened.[41]

"The blessed Holy One said, 'I wanted to establish you in an exalted place, so that you would cleave to life; but you wanted the place where the Female dwells. Go, *say to them, "Return to your tents*" (Deuteronomy 5:27)—each one should go to his female and unite with her.'[42]

"Nevertheless, since Israel acted only out of the supernal awe that was upon them, all that was said of them was *Would that they had this heart of theirs to revere Me* (Deuteronomy 5:26). From here we learn that if someone commits an act—yet without setting his heart and intent to the evil side—even though he commits wrong, since he did not act intentionally no punishment falls upon him as on another person, and the blessed Holy One does not render judgment against him for evil.[43]

"*And you, stand here with Me* (Deuteronomy 5:28). From here on, he separated completely from his wife, cleaving

and ascending to another place—to the Male, not to the Female. Happy is the share of Moses the faithful prophet, who attained high rungs, such as no other human ever reached! Of this is written *He who is good before God will escape her…* (Ecclesiastes 7:26). What is meant by *good*? Moses, of whom is written *She saw that he was good* (Exodus 2:2). Since he was *good*, he ascended to another high rung. Thus it is written *for the place* אשר אתה עומד עליו (*asher attah omed alav*), *on which you stand, is holy ground* (ibid. 3:5)—עומד עליו (*omed alav*), *above which* [*you*] *stand*, precisely! Why? Because *he was good*, and *good* is the Male.[44]

"Now, you might say that Rabbi Yehudah said, 'What about David, of whom is written *and good-looking* (1 Samuel 16:12)? Why wasn't he greater?' Well, it is written וטוב ראי (*ve-tov ro'i*), *and good-looking*—כראי (*ki-r'i*), like a mirror, a mirror in which to gaze. In this way טוב (*tov*), *good*, was with him; מראי (*mere'i*), from *re'i*, which is a mirror, he was *good*. But of Moses is written טוב הוא (*tov hu*), *he was good*—he himself. Whereas here, טוב ראי (*tov ro'i*). Nevertheless, [David] inhabited both, since one is linked to the other. And Moses, after being *good*, ascended to become the body—איש (*ish*), *man*: והאיש (*Ve-ha-ish*), *And the man, Moses was very humble* (Numbers 12:3)."[45]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "In all his actions, a person should set the blessed Holy One before him. We have already established the matter." Rabbi Yehudah follows his general reasoning, for he has said, "Whoever is walking on the road should focus his attention on three things, the highest of which is prayer. Yet although prayer is so important, highest of all is two or three companions sharing words of Torah, for then they do not fear, since *Shekhinah* participates with them."[46]

Like when Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Ḥiyya were walking on the road. Rabbi El'azar said, "It is written: *YHVH Elohim made coats of skin for Adam and his wife, and He clothed*

them (Genesis 3:21). Now, were they stripped of that *skin* until now? Yes—but garments of glory."[47]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said to him, "If so, they didn't deserve them. For if you say, 'Before they sinned, He clothed them'—no; after they sinned, it is written *YHVH Elohim made* [*coats of skin*] *for Adam and his wife*, [*and He clothed them*]."[48]

He replied, "Certainly so! At first, they resembled the pattern above and were stripped of lowly patterns, and celestial light surrounded them. After they sinned, He transformed them into the patterns of this world, removing from them the patterns above. What is written? *YHVH Elohim made coats of skin for Adam and his wife*—corresponding to the pattern of this world.[49]

"It is written: *Aaron and his sons you shall bring forward and dress them in tunics* (Exodus 29:4, 8). There, corresponding to the pattern above; here, corresponding to the pattern below. There, כתנות (*kotnot*), tunics of, linen; here, כתנות (*kotnot*), *coats of, skin*. Yet even so, the beauty of those garments surpassed all.[50]

"*The eyes of the two were opened* (Genesis 3:7)—to the form of this world, which was not the case before, when they were gazing open-eyed above. It is written: *I will lead the blind by a road they do not know; by paths they do not know I will conduct them. I will turn darkness before them into light…* (Isaiah 42:16). The blessed Holy One will one day open eyes that are unwise to perceive [262a] supernal wisdom and to apprehend what they did not apprehend in this world, so that they may know their Lord. Happy are the righteous who will attain that wisdom, for there is no wisdom like that wisdom, nor knowledge like that apprehending!"[51]

As they were walking, they saw some robbers pursuing them to raid them. Rabbi El'azar gazed at them, and two wild beasts came and killed them. He said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One who has saved us!"

Rabbi El’azar proclaimed, “*When you walk, your stride will be unrestrained; if you run, you will not stumble* (Proverbs 4:12). And it is written: *For His angels He will command for you, to guard you on all your ways* (Psalms 91:11), and *For Me he desired, and I will deliver him* (ibid., 14).”

It has been taught as supernal mystery in the Book of Concealment: Three cavities of inscribed letters are revealed in the skull of *Ze’eir Anpin*. And we have learned: There are three brains concealed in those cavities, and from the flow of the supernal hidden brain of *Attiqa Qaddisha*, four brains appear in that *Ze’eir Anpin*, and these four brains spread through all. They are four channels in the four compartments of tefillin, which the blessed Holy One puts on.[52]

Therefore a person should put them on every day, since they constitute the supernal Holy Name in its inscribed letters, as is written: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you* (Deuteronomy 28:10). And we have learned: *The name of YHVH*—the actual *name of YHVH*, and this refers to the tefillin of the head.[53]

The higher brain flowing into the lower brain—called two brains, of which is written *wisdoms* (Proverbs 1:20), expressed as one.[54]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “That is what is written: *Consecrate unto Me every firstborn* (Exodus 13:2)—which is the crown encompassing and concealing all those others. *Every firstborn*, unspecified—to include the flow from above, hidden of all. This is called *breach of every womb* (ibid.)—opening of the whole unified flow above.”[55]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “And concealed in the י (*yod*) of the Holy Name. One compartment of tefillin, which is *Consecrate unto Me every firstborn*, unspecified. Supernal brain, one compartment.”[56]

Second: *So when* [*YHVH*] *brings you* (Exodus 13:11).[57]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “The brain whose gates bring forth fifty gates. There are many gates, corresponding to the many times it is written *who brought you out of the land of Egypt* (Exodus 20:1); *YHVH brought you out of Egypt* (ibid. 13:9). The memory of Egypt is mentioned many times—fifty, corresponding to fifty.[58]

“We have learned in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava that he said, ‘Many gates above and below, which were shut and bound by chains, the blessed Holy One burst open, to bring forth Israel. For through the gates of that brain, all other gates are opened and bound; and if the gates of this brain had not been broken and opened, others would not have been opened to execute judgment and to bring forth Israel from slavery.’[59]

“All is sealed in this, who is called Supernal Mother, from whom power is aroused for Mother Below. Who is She? The one of whom is written ולאומי אלי האזינו (*u-l’ummi elai ha’azinu*), *and My nation, give ear to Me* (Isaiah 51:4). Do not read לְאוּמִי (*le’ummi*), *My nation*, but rather לְאִמִּי (*le-immi*), *to My mother*—the blessed Holy One went on loving Assembly of Israel until He called Her ‘My mother.’[60]

“This issues from Supernal Mother, who is the second compartment, called ה (*he*) of the Holy Name, opening into fifty gates. From this issues a breath to one nostril of the armoire of the nose.[61]

“We have learned: The Jubilee, in which slaves go free, is joined to this brain. For they are the fifty years of Jubilee and the fifty days of counting the Omer, joining it. Here spirits of slaves rest, and they take a breath, as is written: *On the day that YHVH gives you rest from your distress and your agitation, and from the hard labor* (Isaiah 14:3). Therefore, ה (*he*) is tranquility of spirit, liberating the spirit.[62]

“The exodus from Egypt depends on this compartment and on the letter ה (*he*) of the Holy Name, as has been said.

Until here, generality of the Holy Name.[63]

"Come and see: From the side of Father issues *Ḥesed*; from the side of Mother, *Gevurah*. The blessed Holy One embraces all, and with them the letter ו (*vav*) is adorned."[64] [262b]

Third: *Hear, O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—Israel the Elder.[65]

You shall love YHVH your God (ibid., 5). Rabbi Shim'on taught, "This is a supernal mystery, that Israel is crowned on the side of Father. Who is He? Abraham. And He is crowned on the side of Mother. Who is He? Isaac.[66]

"We have learned: *You shall love*—because one loves the King greatly, he acts kindly toward all. The most precious חסד (*ḥesed*), kindness, is called 'kindness of truth,' for which one seeks no reward, but rather out of love for the King, whom he loves intensely. *Ḥesed*, kindness, depends on love for the King. So, *Abraham, My lover* (Isaiah 41:8)—because he loved Him so greatly, he spread kindness through the world. Thus, *You shall love*—kindness depends on love. This is the third compartment.[67]

"Fourth: *It shall be, if you heed…. Take care…. Then the wrath of YHVH will flare…* (Deuteronomy 11:13, 16–17)—harsh *Gevurah* and stern Judgment, issuing from the side of Supernal Mother. We have learned: Although She is not Judgment, from Her side issues supernal *Gevurah*.[68]

"Now, you might say, '*It shall be, if you heed*—which is not Judgment!' Well, there is no crown among all crowns of the King that does not encompass good and evil—especially *Gevurah*, which includes good and evil.[69]

"These four are grasped by ו (*vav*), who crowns itself with them, and these are the tefillin that the blessed Holy One puts on. We have learned: This *vav* ascends and is adorned with its crowns, grasping one and the other, crowned with all. So *vav* is the center of all, above and below, displaying complete Wisdom in every direction."[70]

Rabbi Abba taught, “Concerning what is written: *Only your fathers did YHVH desire* (Deuteronomy 10:15)—from here Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘The patriarchs are the holy supernal Chariot, for it is written: *did YHVH desire*.’[71]

“Come and see: Just as there is a holy Chariot below, so there is a holy Chariot above. And what is it? The one that we have mentioned. All is called ‘holy Chariot,’ all interlinked, all becoming one.[72]

“*Only your fathers*—three, yet a chariot is four. How do we know four? As is written: *and He chose their seed after them* (Deuteronomy 10:15). What does this imply? Including with them King David, who is the fourth to be arranged in the holy Chariot. For we have learned: The patriarchs are the full arrangement of all, and by them the body was completed, fashioned, and unified. King David came and consummated all, making the body firm, perfecting it with them.”[73]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Just as the patriarchs were worthy of being crowned with the holy Chariot, so David was worthy of being established as the fourth support of the Chariot.”

Rabbi Yehudah said, “It is written of David: *He was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on* (1 Samuel 16:12). Why *ruddy*? Because of his allotted share. *Ruddy*—Judgment, surely! *With fine eyes*—Judgment with Compassion, as is written: *the faithful acts of love for David* (Isaiah 55:3).”[74]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “We have established *the acts of love for David* in their place. However, *He was ruddy*—as we have said. *With fine eyes*—the patriarchs.[75]

“Come and see: Jerusalem and Zion—Judgment and Compassion. Nevertheless, it is written: *the City of David, which is Zion* (1 Kings 8:1). It is written: *The Holy One is in your midst, and I will not enter the city* (Hosea 11:9)—‘The blessed Holy One has sworn that He will not enter heavenly Jerusalem [until Israel enters earthly Jerusalem].’ When?”[76]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “When the kingdom of the House of David is restored to its place below.”

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “שׁ (*Shin*), inscribed with three knots, and ש (*shin*) with four knots—alluding to three and alluding to four. Three, as we have mentioned; four, becoming a holy Chariot as one. For this is the entirety of supernal arrangement, and from here those below branch out and flow on their paths, on their straps hanging from these hairs of the head, from which all those others are suspended and from which they flow, until they are joined to their place.[77]

“We have learned: ו (*Vav*) grasps those upper ones that we have mentioned, and these are the tefillin that the blessed Holy One puts on. Therefore a person should be glorified in them. Of him is written *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you* (Deuteronomy 28:10)—*the* actual *name of YHVH*, namely the tefillin of the head.[78]

“The tefillin of the arm are the left, which is called עוז (*oz*), *strength*, inheriting from *strength*, as is written: *It shall be a sign on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand* (Exodus 13:16)—with a ה (*he*), namely the ה (*he*) that we have established. Happy is the share [263a] of Israel![79]

“So the last ה (*he*) grasps the tefillin, for She is left. Who are they? Four who are one body, so they are included in one. Who are they? *Tif’eret, Netsaḥ, Hod, Yesod*. And She is ה (*he*) of ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, and She grasps them all, for She is blessed by them and composed of them all.”[80]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “If so, look at what is written: *You will see My back* (Exodus 33:23), and we have learned: ‘This is the knot of tefillin.’”[81]

He replied, “We have already established this—and it is fine; all elucidates the matter. Therefore from this, one strap hangs down, since from Her those below are suspended and from Her they are nourished. So She is

called *sign*, as is said: זאת (*Zot*), *This, is the sign of the covenant* (Genesis 9:17); and it is written *It shall be a sign on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*—with a ה (*he*), as has been said."[82]

שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear, O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4). Rabbi Yeiva said, "Israel the Elder."[83]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "A large ע (*ayin*), including seventy names of total testimony.[84]

"*Hear, O Israel!*—as is written: *Hear, O heavens* (Isaiah 1:2); *Give ear, O heavens* (Deuteronomy 32:1). Here, too, *Hear, O Israel*. All is one matter.[85]

"*YHVH* (ibid. 6:4)—head of all, in radiance of the Holy Ancient One, and called Father.[86]

"אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *Our God* (ibid.)—depth of streams and springs, issuing and flowing to all.[87]

"*YHVH* (ibid.)—crown of the Tree, consummation of roots.[88]

"*One* (ibid.)—Assembly of Israel. All is one whole, interlinked, with no division to be found; rather, all is one."[89]

Rabbi Yitsḥak taught, "The holy supernal Chariot—four compartments of tefillin, put on by ו (*vav*), as has been said. Another holy Chariot—four others included in one, put on by the last ה (*he*), as has been established."[90] [265a][91]

Rabbi Abba sent to Rabbi Shim'on, saying, "Regarding that which the Master has established about the tefillin of the Master of the Universe and their being the Holy of Holies—how do we find Scriptural support for the leather of tefillin and those straps being considered holiness?"[92]

He replied, "*YHVH Elohim made coats of skin for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them* (Genesis 3:21). *For Adam and his wife*, precisely! So it was established by Rav Hamnuna Sava, and these are of the head and the hand—ידכה

(*yadekhah*), *your hand*, with a ה (*he*), as has been established."[93]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "There are some who teach as follows: 'That left arm of the blessed Holy One, called *Gevurah*.' If so, there remain in the head only three, whereas there are four! However, there are two holy Chariots, and the Companions have spoken well. Accordingly, one is joined to the heart, and one is joined to the brain; and heart and brain are joined with one another in single coupling. *It shall be a sign*—as has been said—*on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, and She is called none other than *sign*."[94]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "When a person rises early in the morning, puts tefillin on his head and tefillin with the holy insignia on his arm, enwraps himself in a wrap of *mitsvah*, and is about to go out of the entrance of his house, he encounters the mezuzah—inscription of the Holy Name—on the entrance of his house. Four holy angels join him, emerging with him from the entrance, and they escort him to the synagogue, proclaiming before him, 'Give honor to the image of the Holy King! Give honor to the son of the King, to the countenance of the Holy King!' The Holy Spirit settles upon him and proclaims, '*Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3).'[95]

"That Holy Spirit then ascends on high and testifies concerning him before the Holy King. Then the supernal King commands that all the members of His palace, all those familiar to Him, be inscribed before Him, as is written: *It was written in a book of remembrance before Him concerning those who revere YHVH* ולחושבי (*ul-ḥoshevei*), *and contemplate, His name…* (Malachi 3:16)—as is said: בחשב (*be-ḥeshev*), *with the designed band of, the ephod* (Exodus 29:5)—those who fashion for His Name all kinds of handiwork: the handiwork of tefillin with their compartments, their straps, and their writing; handiwork of tzitzit with their threads, their thread of blue; handiwork of

mezuzah. These are *ḥoshevei, those who contemplate, His name*; and it is written וחושבי מחשבות (*ve-ḥoshevei maḥashavot*), *and designers of designs* (ibid. 35:35).[96]

"Furthermore, the blessed Holy One glories in him and proclaims through all the worlds, 'See what kind of creature I have made in My world!'[97]

"But as for one who enters His presence in the synagogue after leaving his house without tefillin on his head or tzitzit on his garment, and says, *I bow at Your holy temple in awe of You* (Psalms 5:8)—the blessed Holy One says, 'Where is My awe? Look, he is bearing false testimony!'"[98]

Rabbi Yose said, "Happy is the share of Moses, who said here אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God* (Deuteronomy 6:4). For Rabbi Yitsḥak said, 'Moses was attached to a higher rung than other faithful prophets.'[99]

"And Rabbi Shim'on said, 'If people knew the words of Torah, they would know that there is not a single word in Torah, or a single letter, that does not contains sublime precious secrets.[100]

"'Come and see what is written: *Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice* (Exodus 19:19). And we have learned: "What is meant by *with a voice*? With the voice of Moses." That is fine: with the voice of Moses, precisely! With that *voice* to which he was joined, surpassing all other prophets, and from which Moses was nourished, more so than all of them. Since he was joined beyond them all to that *voice*, a high rung, he said to Israel, *YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 6:5), which is the rung called *Shekhinah*, in their midst. Happy is his share!'[101]

"And Rabbi Shim'on said, 'We have learned: "The curses in Leviticus were uttered by Moses from the mouth of Power; the ones in Deuteronomy… were uttered by Moses from his own mouth." What is meant by 'from his own

mouth’? Now, would you ever imagine that Moses uttered even one small letter of Torah from himself?[102]

“‘However, it is fine. And we have aroused the meaning: We have not learned “from himself,” but rather, “from his own mouth.” What is that? The *voice* to which he was joined. So, those “from the mouth of Power,” and these “from his own mouth”—from the rung to which he was linked, surpassing other faithful prophets. Thus, everywhere אלהיך (*Elohekha*), *your God*, whereas here אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God*.’[103]

“Come and see: How carefully people should guard their ways, so that they devote themselves to the service of their Lord and attain eternal life! Beneath the throne of the Holy King are supernal habitations; and in that place of the throne is attached a mezuzah, providing deliverance from many masters of Judgment [265b] who are poised to threaten people in that world.[104]

“Similarly has the blessed Holy One done for Israel, giving them commandments of Torah for them to engage in, to be saved in this world from many masters of Judgment, from many accusers, who lie in wait for people every day.”

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “One who guards his ways should not step over water that has been poured in front of a door, because a certain demon dwells there between the two doorposts, facing the opening, and he sees what is done inside the house; and a person should not pour water in front of the door.”[105]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “We have no objection to clean water, as long as it has not been poured out contemptuously. Why? Because [the demon] is authorized to do harm. Furthermore, he will turn his head toward the house, and whatever he gazes upon is cursed.[106]

“He has 365 assistants—corresponding to the days of the year—over whom he rules, and they all go out with a person when he emerges from the entrance of his house.”

Rabbi El’azar said, “Against all this the blessed Holy One desired to protect Israel, so He composed the Holy Name above—Torah. The entire Torah is a Holy Name, and whoever engages in Torah engages in His Name.[107]

“Come and see: A person should inscribe on the entrance of his house the Holy Name, which is faith of all. For wherever the Holy Name appears, evil species disappear and cannot accuse a person, as is written: *No evil will befall you*… (Psalms 91:10).[108]

“The place of the entrance of the house is called mezuzah, corresponding to the pattern above. The place of the entrance of the supernal House is called mezuzah—perfection of the House, opening of the House. From that mezuzah flee many masters of Judgment; prosecutors vanish before it. Correspondingly below, when a person affixes a mezuzah to the entrance of his house—the Holy Name inscribed with its letters—he is adorned with the crowns of his Lord, and evil species do not approach the entrance of his house and disappear from there.”[109]

Rabbi Abba was coming from seeing Rabbi Shim’on, and he encountered Rabbi Yitsḥak, who said to him, “From where is the master of light coming? A man who cleaves to consuming fire every day, surely *light dwells with him* (Daniel 2:22)!”[110]

He replied, “We have learned as follows: A person is obligated to greet *Shekhinah* on every new moon and Sabbath. And who is that? His teacher.’ All the more so, the Supernal Lamp, whom all inhabitants of the world should greet.”[111]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Let me return with you and greet *Shekhinah*, and I will taste some of those sublime words that you tasted in his presence.”[112]

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, “*A song of ascents. To You I lift my eyes, O dweller in heaven* (Psalms 123:1). The author

of this song is not mentioned; but wherever it is anonymous, it was uttered by the Holy Spirit about Israel in exile.[113]

"היושבי (*Ha-yoshevi*), *O dweller, in heaven*—the verse should read היושב (*ha-yoshev*), *O dweller, in heaven*; why היושבי (*ha-yoshevi*)? Well, we have already established that whoever wishes to offer his prayer before the Holy King should request from the depth of all that blessings be poured out below, as is written: *From the depths, I call You, YHVH* (Psalms 130:1). This י (*yod*) is depth of all, and this should pour forth blessings to the place called *heaven*, so that all may be nourished by it. Thus, היושבי (*Ha-yoshevi*), *O dweller, in heaven—in heaven*, really! For when those blessings flow and are drawn from that depth of all, settling in the place called *heaven*, then blessings appear among those above and those below.[114]

"*Like the eyes of slaves to the hand of their masters* (Psalms 123:2). What is meant by *like the eyes of slaves*? Well, they are the various princes of the nations, who are nourished only from the residue of the crown of the tree to which Israel clings. When Israel obtains blessings from that place, they are all blessed from Israel.[115]

"*Like the eyes of a slave-girl to the hand of her mistress* (ibid.)—the *slave-girl* whom we have established, whose power was slain by the blessed Holy One in Egypt. For she has power only when it is drawn from the drippings of this land of Israel, and the land of Israel [266a] is called *her mistress*. Of this is written *At three things the earth trembles…* (Proverbs 30:21–23). What is meant by ארץ (*erets*), *the earth*? This is *erets*, the land of, Israel, as has been said.[116]

"*At a slave who becomes a king* (ibid., 22)—those *slaves* that we mentioned, when dominion is given to one of them. This corresponds to what is written: *who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of slaves* (Exodus 20:2).[117]

"*And a slave-girl who dispossesses her mistress* (Proverbs 30:23). Who is that? The *slave-girl* that we

mentioned.[118]

“Come and see: From the side of this *slave-girl* issue many dazzling demonic guards, accusing Israel, denouncing them. But the blessed Holy One acts toward Israel like a father seeking to protect his son from everything. The blessed Holy One says, ‘Israel, many accusers are poised against you. Devote yourselves to serving Me, and I will protect you from outside. You will be inside your homes, sleeping in your beds, and I will be on guard around your beds.’[119]

“Come and see: When those evil species approach a person’s door, they raise their heads and see the holy insignia visible outside: שדי (*Shaddai*), adorned with its crowns. This name dominates all of them; in fear of it, they flee, not coming near the door.”[120]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said to him, “If so, a person should inscribe this name on the door of his house and no more. Why the whole passage?”[121]

He replied, “It is fine, for this name is not crowned except by all those letters, inscribed with the script of the King. When the whole passage is written, this name is adorned with its crowns and goes forth like a king with all his forces. Then [the demons] fear it and flee.[122]

“Come and see: והיה (*Ve-hayah*), *It shall be* (Deuteronomy 11:13)—the Holy Name from below to above. Therefore *Shaddai* is inscribed outside, opposite this name: והיה (*Ve-hayah*), *It shall be*, on the inside; *Shaddai* on the outside, so that a person will be protected on all sides, from within and from without.”[123]

Rabbi Abba said, “Many holy forces stand ready at the moment when a person fixes a mezuzah on his entrance, all of them proclaiming, *This is the gate of YHVH…* (Psalms 118:20). Happy is the share of Israel![124]

“Then the people of Israel are recognized as being sons of the Holy King, since they are all marked by Him: marked in their bodies with the holy insignia, marked in their

clothes with a wrap of *mitsvah*, marked on their heads with compartments of tefillin with the name of their Lord, marked on their hands with a strap of holiness, marked in their shoes with a shoe of *mitsvah*, marked outdoors by sowing and reaping, marked in their homes—in all ways marked as sons of the supernal King. Happy is their share!”[125]

As they went along, Rabbi Abba said, “What is the meaning of the verse אותי (*Oti*), *Me, they have forsaken—Fountain of living waters—to hew out their own cisterns*… (Jeremiah 2:13)? אותי (*Oti*), *My sign, they have forsaken*—one who betrays את (*at*), the sign of, the holy insignia. How does he betray it? By inserting it into an alien domain, which is called *broken cisterns* (ibid.). For other nations are called *broken cisterns*, whereas that of Israel is called *fountain*—a place from which a flow of clear waters gushes forth, as is said: *flowing water from the midst of your well* (Proverbs 5:15); and it is written *A spring of gardens, a well of living waters*… (Song of Songs 4:15).[126]

“*That can hold no water* (Jeremiah 2:13). What is meant by this? Well, the River gushing forth waters the whole Garden, saturating every single place, as we have established, until filling the place in the Garden called *a well of living waters*, whence those above and below are nourished, as is said: *From there it divides*… (Genesis 2:10). But all those aspects of the Left Side are not watered from that flow of streaming water, because they are from the side of other nations.[127]

“One who betrays the Holy Name clings to that side—to *broken cisterns that can hold no water*, which does not enter there. And he who succeeds in guarding it becomes worthy of being watered by that flow of the stream in this world and in the world that is coming, as is written: *You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring*… (Isaiah

58:11); and he becomes worthy of having that supernal Well filled, conveying blessings above and below.[128]

"Woe to the one who betrays this holy insignia, for he betrays [266b] the supernal Name. Moreover, he prevents this Well from being blessed, and we proclaim over him: *For he has defamed a virgin of Israel* (Deuteronomy 22:19). Rabbi Shim'on has established this in its place: Whoever brings false accusations against his first wife, defaming her, is as if he defames above, as is written: *For he has defamed a virgin of Israel*, unspecified.[129]

"This accords with what has been said by Rabbi Ḥiyya in the name of Rabbi Yose: 'A virgin inherits seven blessings, and is blessed by seven, because the Virgin of Israel inherits seven blessings and is thus called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven.'[130]

"Another woman, from where does her blessing come? From the blessing of Boaz and Ruth, as is said: *All the people at the gate and the elders said, 'We are witnesses. May YHVH make the woman* [*who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah*…]' (Ruth 4:11). For surely, a virgin is blessed with seven in this mystery!"[131]

When they reached a certain field, they saw trees and sat down beneath them. Rabbi Abba said, "Here is clarity for words of Torah! Let us sit."[132]

He opened, saying, "*On that day, a great shofar will be blown*… (Isaiah 27:13). *On that day*—what is meant by *that*? Well, *that day* known to the blessed Holy One, as is said: *There will be one day—known to YHVH—neither day nor night* (Zechariah 14:7).[133]

"Further, *on that day*—as is said: *On that day, when Gog comes to the soil of Israel* (Ezekiel 38:18).[134]

"*A great shofar will be blown*. What difference does it make to us whether it is great or small? Well, that supernal shofar through which slaves always go forth to freedom. And what is it? Jubilee, for Jubilee is supernal and great;

and when this is aroused, all freedom of the worlds is thereby aroused. That is called *a great shofar*.[135]

"*And* האובדים (*ha-ovedim*), *those who lose, will come* (Isaiah 27:13). The verse should read האבודים (*ha-avudim*) or הנאבדים (*ha-ne'evadim*), *those who are lost*. What is meant by *ha-ovedim*? *Those who lose*, really, because they are in an alien domain. From here we learn that one who dwells in an alien domain suckles from an alien power, and it is as if he does not abide in his faith. So they are called *ovedim, those who lose*—they *lose* on all sides. For when the people of Israel dwell in the Holy Land, they prove worthy constantly, attaining all, attaining above and below.[136]

"Alternatively, *and ha-ovedim, those who lose, will come*. Who are they? Righteous One and Assembly of Israel, who are called *ovedim, those who lose*. How do we know this? Assembly of Israel, as is written: *Why* אבדה הארץ (*avedah ha-arets*), *has the land lost?* (Jeremiah 9:11). It is not written אבודה (*avudah*) or נאבדת (*ne'evedet*), *been lost*, but rather *avedah ha-arets, has the land lost*—Assembly of Israel.[137]

"Righteous One, as is written: *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *loses* (Isaiah 57:1)—it is not written אבוד (*avud*) or נאבד (*ne'evad*), *is lost*, but rather *The righteous one avad, loses*. This has already been established.[138]

"Now, you might say, '*And* [*they*] *will come*—from where do these *who lose* come? Well, Assembly of Israel, from exile. Righteous One, as has been established, for it is written: *When YHVH restored Zion* (Psalms 126:1), for He will return to His place and join Assembly of Israel. Thus, *and those who lose in the land of Assyria will come*.[139]

"Now, you might say, '*And bow down to YHVH on the holy mountain in Jerusalem* (Isaiah 27:13)—what does this indicate?' Well, this clause applies to *those who were scattered in the land of Egypt* (ibid.), for Israel will not come forth from exile except with *Shekhinah*, as we have established, and *those who were scattered will bow down to YHVH*…."[140]

Rabbi Abba said further, “It is written: *YHVH will guard your going and your coming, now and forever* (Psalms 121:8). *Will guard your going*—granted; but what is indicated by *and your coming*? After all, one who enters his house does not fear. Well, a person who places the holy insignia of words of the supernal Name is protected from all. When he leaves, the one who dwells at the entrance of his house raises his eyes and sees the holy insignia affixed to the door. When the person goes out, he escorts him and protects him; when he enters his house, he proclaims before him, ‘Show care for the honor of the image of the Holy King!’ All this because of that holy insignia marked on his door.[141]

“Not only is a person protected, but it is written *YHVH will guard your going and your coming…*—the blessed Holy One protects him when he enters and when he leaves. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world that is coming![142]

“Come and see: As for this evil spirit dwelling [267a] at the gates, woe to the person who does not know how to beware of it and does not inscribe on the entrance of his house the holy supernal Name, to be with him! For [this spirit] has 365 evil assistants, accusers, each one officiating on its day. All of them are present with him throughout all days of the year, accusing him above and below; all of them are near him day and night—by day, denouncing him; by night, tormenting him in his dreams.[143]

“When he goes out—accusing him. When he comes in, they place their hands on his shoulders and say, ‘Woe to so-and-so who has left his Lord’s domain! Woe to so-and-so in this world and in the world that is coming!’[144]

“Therefore, scions of faith should be marked in every way with the insignia of their Lord, so that every aspect of evil species will tremble, so that they will be protected in this world and in the world that is coming. Happy is the share of Israel! Of them is written *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever…* (Isaiah 60:21).”[145]

You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart… (Deuteronomy 6:5).[146] Rabbi Yose opened, "*Now, what am I doing here?—declares YHVH—For My people has been taken away for nothing…* (Isaiah 52:5). Come and see the love of the blessed Holy One for Israel! Even though their sins caused Him to depart from among them, and they have been scattered among the nations, He demands requital for their humiliation.[147]

"Come and see: When Israel dwelled in their land, the blessed Holy One delighted in His garden and drew near Israel, hearing their voice and glorying in them. Once their sins have prevailed and Israel has been exiled from the Holy Land, the blessed Holy One does not enter His garden nor delight in it. Furthermore, He cries out, *Now, what am I doing* פה (*phoh*), *here?—declares YHVH*. And elsewhere it is written: פה (*Poh*), *Here, will I dwell, for I desired it* (Psalms 132:14). *For My people has been taken away for nothing*—as is said: *You were sold for nothing* (Isaiah 52:3).[148]

"Ever since the day that Israel was exiled from their land, there has been no joy before the blessed Holy One, as is written: *I clothe the heavens in blackness …* (Isaiah 50:3). All this because of the love that the blessed Holy One feels toward them, as is said: *'I have loved you,' says YHVH* (Malachi 1:2). Therefore, *You shall love YHVH your God*.[149]

"*You shall love YHVH your God*—that a person should be bound in love; for every sublime service that a person offers to the blessed Holy One should be performed with love, since there is no service like the love of the blessed Holy One."[150]

Rabbi Abba said, "These words are the entirety of Torah, for the Ten Utterances of Torah are included here, as the Companions have already established.[151]

"Come and see: Nothing is as precious to the blessed Holy One as one who loves Him fittingly. How? As is written:

with all your heart. What is indicated by *with all*? The verse should read *with your heart, with your soul, with your might*. Why *with all*? Well, to include two hearts—one good and one evil. *With all your soul* (Deuteronomy 6:5)—one good and one evil. בכל מאדך (*Be-khol me'odekha*), *With all your might* (ibid.)—this is not meant to be expounded."[152]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Even this is meant to be expounded. How so? Whether money comes to him from inheritance or another source, or whether he earns it; thus it is written *be-khol me'odekha, with all your substance*."[153]

Rabbi Abba said, "I return to *You shall love*. Whoever loves the blessed Holy One is crowned with *Ḥesed* on all sides and performs kindness entirely, not sparing his body or his money. How do we know this? From Abraham, as has been said, who, in love for his Lord, did not spare his heart—namely his impulse—nor his soul nor his money.[154]

"His heart—he paid no heed to his own desire because of love for his Lord. Nor to his soul, to his son, to his wife, because of love for his Lord. His money—for he used to stand at the crossroads and provide food for the whole world. Consequently, he was adorned with the crown of *Ḥesed*, as is written: חסד (*Ḥesed*), *Love, to Abraham* (Micah 7:20).[155]

"Whoever is bound to the love of his Lord attains this. Moreover, all worlds are blessed for his sake, as is written: וחסידיך יברכוכה (*Va-ḥasidekha yevarakhukha*), *Your devoted ones will bless You* (Psalms 145:10)—do not read יברכוכה (*yevarakhukha*), *will bless You*, but rather יברכו כה (*yevarakhu koh*), *will bless Koh*)."[156]

One day, Rabbi Yose was ill. Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Yitsḥak went to visit him. They saw him fallen on his face, asleep. They sat. When he awoke, they saw his face smiling. Rabbi Abba said to him, "Have you seen something new?"[157] [267b]

He said to them, “Certainly! For now my soul ascended, and I saw the glory of those who have died and sacrificed themselves for the sanctification of their Lord—how they entered thirteen mountains of pure balsam, and the blessed Holy One delights in them. I saw what I am not permitted to say. I asked them, ‘Whose glory is this? They told me, ‘Those who loved their Lord in that world.’ From what I saw, my soul and my heart were illumined, so my face is smiling.”[158]

Rabbi Abba said to him, “Happy is your share! But Torah testifies of them, as is written: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what He will do for one who awaits Him* (Isaiah 64:3).”[159]

Rabbi Yehudah said to him, “The Companions have already asked why it is written *He will do*, when it should read *You will do*.”[160]

He replied, “This has already been discussed, but mystery of the matter accords with what is written: *to gaze upon the beauty of YHVH and to reflect in His temple* (Psalms 27:4). As they have established, *the beauty of YHVH* is that which comes from the Holy Ancient One, in which the blessed Holy One delights, for that *beauty* issues from the Ancient One.[161]

“Here, too, *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what He will do*. Who? The Ancient One, Concealed of all, for it depends on Him.”[162]

He said to him, “Certainly so! Happy is the share of those to whom the love of their Lord cleaves! Their portion in that world is immeasurable.”

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “Many are the habitations of the righteous in that world, one above another; and the highest habitation of all is reserved for those to whom love is bound, for their habitation surpasses all. Why? Because the blessed Holy One is crowned in this.[163]

“Come and see: All is called Love, and for the sake of love all exists, as is written: *Many waters cannot quench love* (Song of Songs 8:7). All endures by love, for the Holy

Name is found to be so, as has been established. י (*Yod*)—the upper tip is never separated from י (*yod*), since it settles upon it, never parting.[164]

"ה (*He*), as has been established, for י (*yod*) does not separate from it; and they appear as one, lovingly, not parting from one another: י ה (*yod, he*), as has been said. As is written: *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10)—*issues* eternally, cleaving in love.[165]

"ו ה (*Vav, he*)—when they cleave to one another, they join in love as one: groom with bride, whose manner is loving.[166]

"י (*Yod*) with ה (*he*); ה (*he*) with ו (*vav*); ו (*vav*) with ה (*he*). So, all is called Love, bound to one another lovingly. Consequently, whoever loves the King is bound to that love. Thus, *You shall love YHVH your God*."[167]

These words that I command you today shall be [*upon your heart*] (Deuteronomy 6:6).[168]

Rabbi Yitsḥak opened, "*All my bones will say, 'YHVH, who is like You? Saving the poor…'* (Psalms 35:10). This verse was uttered by David through the Holy Spirit. *All my bones will say*—now, who has ever seen bones chanting a song? However, this verse refers to when the blessed Holy One will one day revive the dead, and He will arrange the bones, drawing each one to its place, as is said: *He will invigorate your bones* (Isaiah 58:11). Then they are destined to chant a song.[169]

"What song will they sing? *YHVH, who is like You?* They will immediately offer a song superior to the one that Israel sang at the Sea, for they mentioned the Holy Name only after three words, as is written: מי כמוכה באלים יהוה (*Mi khamokha ba-elim YHVH*), *Who is like You among the gods, O YHVH?* (Exodus 15:11)—whereas here [the bones] will put the Holy Name first, as is written: יהוה מי כמוך (*YHVH mi khamokha*), *YHVH, who is like You?*

"*Saving the poor from one stronger than he*—the good impulse from the evil impulse. For the evil impulse is hard as stone, as is said: *I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh* (Ezekiel 36:26); whereas the good impulse is flesh, as is written: *and give you a heart of flesh* (ibid.).[170]

"Come and see: What does the evil impulse resemble? When it comes to attach itself to a person, it is like iron before being put in the fire; after it is heated, it turns entirely into fire."[171]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "When the evil impulse comes to attach itself to a person, it resembles someone who has been traveling along and approaches a door. At the door, he finds no one restraining him, so he enters the house and becomes a guest. Seeing that there is still no one restraining him, he indulges himself and becomes master of the house, [268a] until eventually the whole house comes under his control.[172]

"From where do we learn this? From the passage about David. What is written? *A wayfarer came to the rich man* (2 Samuel 12:4). *A wayfarer*—approaching the door without wanting to linger there, but rather to proceed on his journey. So is the evil impulse: like someone approaching the house, he approaches a person, arousing him with a minor sin—a temporary guest. If he sees no one restraining him, what is written? *To prepare for the guest who had come to him* (ibid.)—he becomes a guest who lodges in the house, arousing him with sins for a day or two, like a guest who is invited to stay in the house for a couple of days. Once he sees that there is no one restraining him, what is written? *He prepared it* לאיש (*la-ish*), *for the man, who had come to him* (ibid.)—he becomes master of the house, as is said: האיש (*Ha-ish*), *The man, who is lord of the land* (Genesis 42:30); איש (*ish*), *husband of, Naomi* (Ruth 1:3). So it is with the evil impulse: becoming *ish*, a man, master of the house, toward that person. Now the person is bound to his service and performs his will.[173]

“So a person should set words of Torah upon him, thereby breaking him; for there is no opponent to the evil impulse except for words of Torah. Thus it is written *These words that I command you today shall be upon* לבבך (*levavekha*), *your heart* (Deuteronomy 6:6)—*upon* your two impulses.”[174]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Why does the good impulse need words of Torah?”

He replied, “The good impulse is adorned by them, and the evil impulse is subdued by them.”

When Rabbi Shim’on came, he said, “Surely, this portion of *Shema* alludes to the Ten Utterances, as has been established. Here, *These words* [*that I command you today*] *shall be*—totality of the Ten Utterances. Consequently, there are ten commands here, corresponding to the Ten Commandments of Torah. What are they? *You shall retell them incisively to your children, and speak of them, when you sit in your house, and when you go on the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates* (Deuteronomy 6:7–9). Look, ten, corresponding to the Ten Utterances![175]

“So these passages are a great principle in Torah. Happy is the share of one who completes them twice every day, for then the Holy Name is fittingly sanctified in his mouth!”[176]

Rabbi Aḥa was with Rabbi El’azar one night after midnight, and they were engaged in Torah. Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*For she is your life and the length of your days* (Deuteronomy 30:20). Come and see: Above all the stipulations that the blessed Holy One decreed when they entered the land of Israel was the decree of Torah. Why? Because *Shekhinah* settles in the world only through Torah, and She settles above only through Torah.[177]

“For so my father, Rabbi Shim’on, has said: ‘Oral Torah is known only by virtue of Written Torah. *Shekhinah* settles above and below only with Torah, and as long as Torah is with Her, She can endure in the world, as is written: *For she is your life and the length of your days to dwell upon the land—upon the land*, unspecified. And if not, it is written: *Why has the land been ruined?* And it is written: *Because they forsook My Torah* (Jeremiah 9:11–12).’”[178]

While they were sitting, Rabbi El’azar lowered his head and said, “Certainly so! This is the secret I found in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava, who applied the following verse to the mystery of Assembly of Israel: *He shall not diminish her food, clothing, or conjugal rights* (Exodus 21:10). If they are withheld, what is written? *She shall go out for nothing, with no money* (ibid., 11)—as is said: *Where is your mother’s bill of divorce by which I sent her away?* (Isaiah 50:1); and it is written: *You were sold for nothing…* (ibid. 52:3). Whoever withholds Torah from Her is like one who takes away a woman’s husband, depriving her of him; for She is left as a widow, though not really a widow, as is written: *She has become like a widow* (Lamentations 1:1)—and not *a widow*.”[179]

They sat engaged in Torah until daylight. Once the day shone, they rose and went on. As they were going along, they saw a man walking on the road with his head wrapped. They approached him, but he was whispering [268b] with his lips and did not respond to them at all. Rabbi El’azar said, “Surely, he is consulting his Lord!”[180]

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Aḥa sat down and offered their prayers, while that man stood erect in another place. After they finished praying, they went on their way, and that man slipped away from them. Rabbi El’azar said, “This man is either a fool or his ways are improper.” He said, “Let us engage in Torah, for it is time.”[181]

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*The wise inherit glory, and fools take away disgrace* (Proverbs 3:35). *The wise inherit glory*—happy are those who engage in Torah—"[182]

He had barely begun, when that person approached them. Rabbi El'azar said, "We shouldn't interrupt a word of Torah, for whoever engages in Torah becomes worthy of obtaining a celestial inheritance in the glory of the Holy King, and becomes worthy of obtaining an inheritance in this world. What is that? That which is called Glory of *YHVH*, which never ceases from them, as is written: *The wise inherit glory*—that which is called Glory.[183]

"*And fools take away disgrace*. What is this? Come and see: When a person walks in the straight path before the blessed Holy One and engages in Torah, he inherits that *glory* for himself, and many guardians and advocates appear above over him, all of them speaking in his favor before the Holy King. But if a person does not engage in Torah and does not walk in the ways of his Lord, he produces an accuser over himself. That accuser roams through the air and does not rise above—perhaps the person will repent of his sins. Once he sees that the person does not repent, and does not wish to engage in Torah, then he rises above and testifies to his guilt—as is written: *and fools* מרים (*merim*), *raise, disgrace*."[184]

He opened again, saying, "*However, if the family of Egypt does not make this pilgrimage, it shall not be visited by the same affliction with which YHVH will strike all the other nations that do not come up to observe the Festival of Sukkot* (Zechariah 14:18). Why is Egypt different here than all the other nations, concerning all of whom it is written *they shall receive no rain* (ibid., 17), whereas here it is not so? Well, the Companions have already established that the land of Egypt does not need rain; so it is not included among those who will be deprived of rain. Rather, another punishment is reserved to come upon them. This is well said.[185]

“Come and see what is written: *For the land into which you are coming to possess it is not like the land of Egypt* [*from which you went out, where you sow your seed*] *and water it with your foot* (Deuteronomy 11:10)—for the river rises, watering the land. But here, *By the rain of heaven it drinks water* (ibid., 11)—for the Holy Land is watered by heaven constantly. When Israel occupied themselves with Torah, it was watered fittingly; and whoever withholds Torah from it, it is as if he withholds goodness from the whole world.”[186]

They entered a cave that was on the way. That man entered with them, and they sat down.

That man opened, saying, “*YHVH would speak to Moses face-to-face*, [*as a man speaks to his fellow. And he would return to the camp; and his attendant, Joshua son of Nun, a lad, would not depart from the Tent*] (Exodus 33:11). The beginning of this verse does not match its end, nor the end its beginning, nor does one statement resemble the other. At first, *YHVH would speak to Moses face-to-face*—fine. Then, *and he would return to the camp*; then, *and his attendant, Joshua son of Nun, a lad*…—what does this mean?”[187]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Surely, the blessed Holy One desires to honor us, for now our union is genuine, and *Shekhinah* will not depart from us. Let him who opened the entrance utter the word!”[188]

He opened, saying, “*YHVH would speak to Moses face-to-face*. By many supernal, precious rungs was Moses, the faithful prophet, separated from all other prophets of the world; for compared with him, all of them were like an ape compared to a human being. Other prophets would gaze into a speculum that does not shine, and even so, they could not raise their faces to see—as is written: *I was in a deep sleep upon my face, with my face toward the ground* (Daniel 10:9). Moreover, words were not revealed to them openly.

“Not so with Moses, the faithful prophet! For he would gaze into a shining speculum and yet stand firm. Moreover, he would raise his head to see, like someone saying to his fellow, ‘Raise your head and look me in the face, so that you will know what I am saying.’ So with Moses: *face-to-face*—his head raised without fear; his face raised, gazing [269a] into the radiance of supernal glory. His mind and his countenance did not change like other prophets, who, when wishing to gaze, lost control and lost their minds; the radiance of their countenance changed, and they knew nothing at all of this world.[189]

“Not so with Moses, for he would gaze into that actual supernal rung without losing control or losing his mind. For when he gazed into the radiance of supernal glory, immediately, *he would return to the camp*, to speak with them about whatever they needed, and his mind was settled as before, even more so. Thus, *and he would return to the camp*.[190]

“*And his attendant, Joshua son of Nun, a lad*—surely! For he suckled *from the Tent* and learned to gaze through the Holy Spirit, as is said: *Samuel was ministering in the presence of YHVH, a lad* (1 Samuel 2:18).[191]

“Come and see: As long as Joshua was with Moses, he used to learn and suckle *from the Tent* without fear. After he separated from Moses and was on his own, what is written? *Joshua fell on his face to the ground*… (Joshua 5:14), for he could not bear it—and this was from one messenger; all the more so from another place.[192]

“This may be compared to a person to whom the king entrusted vessels of gold and precious stones. As long as they were with him, the servant of the house handled them and examined them. Once that person departed from the world, the king did not leave anything with the servant and seized his deposit. That servant exclaimed, ‘Woe is me! For in the days of my master all these were in my hands.’

“Similarly with Joshua: In the days of Moses, he used to suckle every day *from the Tent* without fear. After Moses died, what is written? *Joshua fell on his face to the ground and prostrated himself*…. As for me, since I am with you, I examine words of Torah without fear; after I part from you, I will not be able to do so myself.”[193]

He opened again, “*You shall retell them incisively to your children, and speak of them when you sit in your house*… (Deuteronomy 6:7). ושננתם (*Ve-shinnantam*), *You shall retell them incisively*—as is said: *Your arrows*, שנונים (*shenunim*), *sharpened* (Psalms 45:6), for a person should sharpen words of Torah for his son like a double-edged sword, so that sharpness of Torah will enter him, and no dullness will enter his mind.[194]

“*And speak of them*—every single word of Torah has its own path.[195]

“ודברת (*Ve-dibbarta*), *And speak, of them*—the verse should read ותדבר (*u-tdabber*), *and you will speak, of them*. However, a person should conduct himself by them, guiding himself so as not to deviate right or left.[196]

“*When you sit in your house*—to conduct oneself in his house properly, so that the members of his household will learn from him; to conduct himself with them pleasantly and joyfully, and not to cast excessive fear upon his household. All his actions at home should be harmonious and sincere.[197]

“*And when you go on the way* (Deuteronomy 6:7)—to be guided by words of Torah, improving oneself by them as need be, to conduct oneself in ways of Torah. What does that involve? As with Jacob: for a gift, for battle, and for prayer. He should offer a prayer to his Lord—but surpassing them, words of Torah.[198]

“*And when you lie down* (ibid.)—to conduct oneself in reverence for his Lord, in holiness, in humility, so as not to be impudent toward his Lord.[199]

"*And when you rise* (ibid.)—to give praise to his Lord, who has restored his soul. For she bears much guilt before her Lord, yet the blessed Holy One shows him kindness by returning her to his body.[200]

"*You shall bind them as a sign on* ידכה (*yadekha*), *your hand* (ibid., 8). They have already established this: *on* יד כהה (*yad kehah*), *the weak hand*, which is the left. In the Book of *Aggadta* we say: *on* יד כה (*yad koh*), *the hand of thus*, as is said: כה (*Koh*), *Thus, shall be your seed* (Genesis 15:5).[201]

"And our colleagues who dwell in the south have established, according to their mystery, the compartments of tefillin as follows: *Consecrate unto Me every firstborn* (Exodus 13:2)—*every firstborn*, unspecified, corresponding to the highest כתרא (*kitra*), crown, of all. *So when* [*YHVH*] *brings you* (ibid., 11)—corresponding to *Ḥokhmah*. *Hear, O Israel!… You shall love* (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)—corresponding to *Binah*. *It shall be* (ibid. 11:13)—corresponding to *Ḥesed*. Afterward, they are all included in the left arm, which is called עז (*oz*), *strength*; and it is written *by the arm of His strength* (Isaiah 62:8). *Strength* is nothing but Torah; *strength* is nothing but tefillin.[202]

"But these words do not seem right to us. Why? Because *Keter Elyon* comprises all, and is not reckoned. Furthermore, *So* [269b] *when* [*YHVH*] *brings you* depends on the Exodus from Egypt, the place where freedom for slaves is found. So their method is incorrect. But we begin from *Ḥokhmah*, and so it is, and the blessed Holy One puts them on. Thus, four above, four below; four in the site of the brain, four in the site where the heart dwells—since one is linked to the other.[203]

"A person should adorn himself with them, for that is the supernal Holy Name, as is written: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you* (Deuteronomy 28:10). Whoever is adorned with this holy crown is called 'king on earth,' while the blessed Holy One is King in heaven, as is written: *A king is bound by the*

flowing tresses (Song of Songs 7:6). Just as the blessed Holy One is King above, so he is king below.[204]

"Nevertheless, *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house* (Deuteronomy 6:9)—for then he is a person complete in all, becoming complete in the commandments of his Lord, inscribed above, inscribed below. Happy is the share of Israel!"[205]

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "We find two verses, and although all depends on one, they are not on one rung. One verse reads: כה (*Koh*), *Thus, says YHVH Tseva'ot* (1 Samuel 15:2); and another reads: כה (*Koh*), *Thus, says YHVH Elohim* (Isaiah 7:7). What is the difference between them? Well, when it is written *Koh, Thus, says YHVH Tseva'ot*, the utterance comes with Compassion; and when it is written *Koh, Thus, says YHVH Elohim*, the utterance comes with Judgment.[206]

"*Koh, Thus, says YHVH Tseva'ot*—because this *Koh* is blessed by Righteous One and by *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, who are called *YHVH Tseva'ot*. Then the utterance comes assuaged, since it issues from this place. *Koh, Thus, says YHVH Elohim*—then this *Koh* suckles from the side of Judgment, from the site of supernal *Gevurah*. And I have learned from my father that Judgment is with Compassion, for it is written *YHVH Elohim*, and *Elohim* is always *Gevurah*. So, the words were recognized from the mouth of the prophet, and he intended to utter the word from its place, and then those scions of faith knew whence the utterance derived."[207]

Rabbi Aḥa opened, saying, "'*Curse Meroz,' said the angel of YHVH. 'Bitterly curse its inhabitants, for they did not come to the aid of YHVH, to the aid of YHVH among the warriors*' (Judges 5:23). Come and see: This verse is a mystery among sublime mysteries. When the Holy King entrusts His house to *Matronita*, He places in Her hands all His weapons, spears, and catapults, and He puts Her in charge of all those warriors of His, as is written: *Here is the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding it, of the warriors of*

Israel (Song of Songs 3:7). This has already been established. Then the blessed Holy One wages His war, and those warriors that we mentioned wage battles, and they are called *expert in war* (ibid., 8).[208]

"It is written: *From heaven the stars did battle, from their courses they battled with Sisera*… (Judges 5:20–21). And we have learned: When Israel willingly offered to uncover the holy insignia in their flesh, then that *sword avenging with vengeance of the covenant* (Leviticus 26:25) gathered all its forces, all weapons, and all those warriors to wage battle against Sisera, and the stars poured down fire from above.[209]

"And Rabbi Shim'on said, 'Every single star has its own name, by which it is called. The blessed Holy One said to them, "Prepare yourselves to avenge My children. A double vengeance I intend to exact from them. One is for the six hundred chariots that [Samael] lent the prince of Egypt to wage war against Israel, as is written: *He took six hundred select chariots*… (Exodus 14:7). And the other vengeance is for My children, whom they oppressed until now." Therefore they were sentenced to two punishments: one by water and one by fire. By water, as is written: *The wadi Kishon swept them away*… (Judges 5:21); by fire, as is written: *The stars from their courses battled with Sisera*.'[210]

"Among those stars, there was one that did not participate in that vengeance, and it was cursed forever. For when it starts to shine, the other stars come and swallow it up along with its whole cohort, and they all perish as one, as is written: *'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of* YHVH. Now, does an angel have permission to do this? Well, that angel of whom is written *The angel of* Elohim *who was going before the camp of Israel moved* (Exodus 14:19)—this is the one to whom all wars belong.[211] [270a]

"*For they did not come to the aid of* YHVH—when Israel came out of Egypt. *To the aid of* YHVH *among the warriors*—

among those *sixty warriors*, when they gathered to battle against Sisera.[212]

"This is the angel who controls all punishments and all wars of the King, so it is written *the angel of YHVH*. This corresponds to what is written: *the angel redeeming me from all evil…* (Genesis 48:16), as the Companions have already established. This one is destined to be supreme and glorious in the time to come. By this the Holy Name will be magnified, and by this the blessed Holy One intends to exact retribution from the other nations. Thus it is written *I will be magnified and sanctified and made known in the eyes of many nations* (Ezekiel 38:23)."[213]

They went on until they reached Rabbi Shim'on. As soon as he saw them, he said, "Look, *Shekhinah* is here! We must surely show gratitude to the face of *Shekhinah*."[214]

He opened, saying, "*Look, the day is still long; it is not time to gather in the herd. Water the sheep and go and let them graze* (Genesis 29:7). This verse has already been established, for when the people of Israel arouse *teshuvah* before the blessed Holy One, by the merit of Torah they will return to the Holy Land and be gathered from exile. For surely the exile of Israel will be for one day and no more, as is written: *He has made me desolate, faint all the day* (Lamentations 1:13).[215]

"If they do not engage in *teshuvah*, the blessed Holy One says, *'Look, the day is still long; it is not time to gather in the herd*—without merit, without worthy deeds. But there is one remedy for you: Go, *water the sheep*—delve into Torah and be watered by it—*and go and let them graze* in a restful place, in the fine, desirable place of your inheritance.'[216]

"Alternatively, *He said, 'Look, the day is still long…'*—the day called *a day of tumult and din and confusion* (Isaiah 22:5), on which the Temple was destroyed and Israel fell into exile. In the face of evil deeds, that day is prolonged

and extended, as is written: *The day is still long; it is not time to gather in the herd*—because they are prolonging that day. *Water the sheep*—as has been said, with words of Torah, for by the merit of Torah Israel will come out of exile.[217]

"What does Israel say? *They said, 'We cannot until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone off the mouth of the well…'* (Genesis 29:8)—until all the other supernal days are gathered. *And they roll the stone*—and they roll that harsh Judgment of the day that dominates *the mouth of the well*—and that well is with us in exile. When that well is uncovered, and that stone no longer dominates it, immediately *we water the sheep* (ibid.).[218]

"At the end of days, the blessed Holy One intends to restore Israel to the Holy Land and gather them from exile. Who is 'the end of days'? The one who is אחרית הימים (*aḥarit ha-yamim*), the last of days. For with this *aḥarit ha-yamim* Israel suffered exile, as is written: *When all these things come upon you* באחרית הימים (*be-aḥarit ha-yamim*), *in the end of days—be-aḥarit ha-yamim, with the end of days*, precisely! She is Assembly of Israel in exile. Together with this *end of days*, Israel receives punishment in exile, and with this the blessed Holy One wreaks vengeance for Israel constantly, as is written: *what this people will do to your people* הימים באחרית (*be-aḥarit ha-yamim*), *with the end of days* (Numbers 24:14). Everywhere, this is She.[219]

"The blessed Holy One intends to restore Her to Her place, as is written: והיה באחרית הימים (*Ve-hayah be-aḥarit ha-yamim*), *In the end of days, the Mount of YHVH's House will be established at the head of the mountains and elevated above the hills, and all the nations will stream to it* (Isaiah 2:2). This is 'a day.'[220]

"When a shadow starts to form at the beginning of the other day—just as at the time when the Temple was destroyed, a shadow was stretching out, as is written: *Woe, unto us, for the day is fading, for shadows of evening are*

stretching! (Jeremiah 6:4), so a shadow will be the end of exile. The measure of this shadow is six and a half fists, by the gauge of an average man.[221]

"The mnemonic for this mystery among the Companions is the verse *For we are but yesterday, unknowing, for our days are a shadow upon earth* (Job 8:9). *For we are but yesterday*, in exile, not knowing that *our days are a shadow* —for the blessed Holy One to settle us עלי ארץ (*alei arets*), *upon the land*.[222]

"Happy is the share of one who sees it, and happy is the share of one who does not! Woe to him who is present when the mighty lion seeks to join his female, all the more so when they couple as one! Of that moment is written *A lion has roared, who will not fear?…* (Amos 3:8).[223]

"Come and see: At first it is written *He roars mightily over His abode* (Jeremiah 25:30). And when He comes forth to receive His mate, then *A lion has roared, who will not fear?* Of that time it is written *YHVH your God will return your captivity and have compassion on you. He will return and gather you from all the nations where YHVH your God has scattered you* (Deuteronomy 30:3). Why *will return, He will return*? Well, the blessed Holy One *will return* from exile: Assembly of Israel *will return* from exile, and Righteous One *will return* to couple [270b] in His place. Of then is written *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14)."[224] [283a][225]

פרשת וילך

Parashat Va-Yelekh

“HE WENT” (DEUTERONOMY 31:1–30)

Moses went and spoke [*these words to all Israel*] (Deuteronomy 31:1).

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened, “*Who sent His glorious arm to be at Moses’ right hand, splitting the waters before them*… (Isaiah 63:12). *Who sent* [*His glorious arm*] *to be at Moses’ right hand*. Happy are Israel, in whom the blessed Holy One delighted! Because He delighted in them, He called them holy firstborn sons, [283b] brothers. As it were, He descended to dwell with them, as is written: *Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them* (Exodus 25:8). He sought to establish them corresponding to the pattern above, and He spread over them seven clouds of glory. *Shekhinah* went before them, as is written: *YHVH was going before them by day*… (ibid. 13:21).[1]

“Three holy siblings went among them: Moses, Aaron, and Miriam—by whose merit the blessed Holy One gave them supernal gifts, as has been said. All the days of Aaron, clouds of glory never departed from Israel, as has been established, for Aaron was one arm of Israel, corresponding to what is written: *The Canaanite, king of Arad, who dwelled in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by way of* האתרים (*ha-atarim*), *Atharim* (Numbers 21:1)—like a person walking without an arm, supporting himself in every אתר (*atar*), place. So then, *he battled against Israel and took some of them captive* (ibid.), since they were without a right

arm. Consequently, Israel had to make a vow, as is written: *Israel made a vow, saying, 'If You indeed give this people in my hand…'* (ibid., 2).[2]

"Come and see: Aaron was the right arm of the body. Therefore it is written: *Who sent* זרוע תפארתו (*zero'a tif'arto*), *the arm of His glory, to be at Moses' right hand*. Who is that? Aaron.[3]

"*Moses went*. What is meant by *went*? Where did he go? Well, he *went* like a body without an arm, as is said: *They went feebly* (Lamentations 1:6); for Aaron, the right arm, had died, and the body wanted to leave.[4]

"All the days of Moses, the sun illumined the world. All the days of Moses, Israel ate *bread from heaven* (Exodus 16:4). As soon as Joshua came, what is written? *The manna ceased and they ate from the yield of the land…* (Joshua 5:12, 11). What is the difference between them? Well, one is from above; and the other, below. From here we learn: All the days of Moses, the body of the sun was complete, illumining the world; as soon as Moses departed, the body of the sun was gathered in and the body of the moon emerged.[5]

"It is written: *If Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here! How, then, will it be known that I have found favor in Your eyes, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us…?* (Exodus 33:15–16). We have learned as follows: When the blessed Holy One said to Moses, *Look, My angel shall go before you* (ibid. 32:34), Moses said, 'What is this? Will the sparkle of the sun be gathered in and the moon lead us? We do not want the body of the moon. *If Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here!* I want the body of the sun, not the moon!' Then the body of the sun shone, and Moses became like this: the body of the sun before Israel. When Moses was gathered in, the sun was gathered in and the moon shone, and Joshua wielded the light of the moon. Woe for that shame![6]

“He said to them, ‘A hundred and twenty years old I am today’ (Deuteronomy 31:2). This corresponds to what Rabbi El’azar has said: ‘For forty years the sun illumined Israel and was then gathered in, and the moon shone.’”[7]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Concerning what is written: *Some are swept away without justice* (Proverbs 13:23)—certainly so! The Companions have already educed the meaning, and we will establish the verse. But as for what they have educed, all is necessary for the world and for a person’s benefit, that he be gathered in before his time.[8]

“Come and see: As has been said, ‘All spirits issuing from above emerge male and female, and then diverge….’ Occasionally the time of the male has not yet come to couple with his mate, and another comes and marries her. When the time of this coupling comes—as Righteousness is aroused in the world to requite the sinners of the world, it gathers in this other one who had married her, and the other one comes and obtains her. Therefore couplings are difficult for the blessed Holy One.[9]

“All this because he corrupted his deeds. And even though he did not corrupt his deeds extremely, he is gathered in at that moment before his time comes—this not being done with *justice*. Judgment in Righteousness befalls him for his sins, because the time of the other one has come, and he marries her—since she is his.”[10]

Rabbi El’azar said, “Why? Let the blessed Holy One separate them, and let the other one come and marry her.”[11]

He replied, “This is for the benefit of the man, and the kindness that He does for him, so that he will not see his wife in the hands of another.

“Come and see: If the deeds of this [intended] one [284a] are not worthy, even though this woman is his, this other one is not pushed aside to make way for him.[12]

“Come and see: King Saul obtained the kingdom. Why? Because the time of David had not yet come. For the

kingdom surely belonged to David, yet Saul came and obtained it. As soon as [David's] time arrived to inherit what was his, Righteousness—*Malkhuta*, Kingdom, above—was aroused and gathered in Saul on account of his sins, and he was pushed aside to make way for David, and David came and took what was his.[13]

"Why did the blessed Holy One not remove Saul from the kingship without his having to die? Well, the blessed Holy One did kindness with him by gathering him in while he was still king, so that he would not see his servant ruling over him and taking what was previously his.[14]

"Similarly here. Therefore when a person marries, he should supplicate the blessed Holy One that he will not be pushed aside to make way for another.[15]

"It is written: *YHVH said to me, 'Enough for you! Speak no more* [*to Me of this matter*]' (Deuteronomy 3:26). As we have already established, the blessed Holy One said to him, 'Moses, do you want to impair the world? Have you ever in your life seen the sun serve the moon? Have you ever seen the moon ruling while the sun still appears? Rather, *YHVH said to Moses, 'Look, your days have drawn near to die. Call Joshua*…' (ibid. 31:14)—'Let the sun be gathered in and the moon rule. Furthermore, if you enter the land, the moon will be gathered in before you and will not rule. Surely, the dominion of the moon has arrived, yet it cannot rule as long as you exist in the world.'[16]

"*Call Joshua and station yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him* (Deuteronomy 31:14). And what did He say? *Here, you are about to lie with your fathers, and this people will rise*… (ibid., 16). We do not find that the blessed Holy One issued instructions to Joshua, but rather to Moses, saying all this to him, as is written: *and they will forsake Me and violate My covenant…. and My wrath will flare against them on that day. Now, write down this song and teach it to the Children of Israel*

(Deuteronomy 31:16–17, 19). If so, why *that I may instruct him*?[17]

"Well, because He told him, הנך (*Hinnekha*), *Here you are*, [*about to lie with your fathers*… The blessed Holy One said to him, 'Moses, even though you will lie with your fathers, *hinnekha, here you are*—you endure to always illumine the moon; just as the sun, although it has set, has set only to illumine the moon: that is when it illumines the moon, once it has set.' So, *hinnekha, here you are—you are* present *here* to shine—and this is the meaning of *that I may instruct him*. Then Joshua was linked, to be illumined. That is why it is not written *You will lie with your fathers*.[18]

"*He charged Joshua son of Nun and said to him before the eyes of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous*, כי אתה תבא (*ki attah tavo*), *for you yourself will come* [*with this people into the land that YHVH swore to their fathers to give to them*]' (Deuteronomy 31:7)—and afterward, תביא (*tavi*), *you* (*yourself*) *will bring* (ibid., 23). What is the difference between them?[19]

"Well, one—*tavo, you will come*—to announce to him that he would enter the land and endure there. And the other—*tavi, you will bring*—to announce his dominion over Israel. He was assured of his own endurance and assured of dominion over Israel."[20]

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "מכנף (*Mi-kenaf*), *From the edge of, the earth we hear songs: 'Glory to the righteous!' And I said*, לי רזי לי רזי (*Razi li razi li*), *'It is my secret! It is my secret! Woe is me! The treacherous have betrayed; with treachery the treacherous have betrayed!'* (Isaiah 24:16). Woe to inhabitants of the world—to those who do not consider or contemplate the glory of their Lord, and do not contemplate supernal holiness: to sanctify themselves in this world, so as to be holy in the world that is coming![21]

"מכנף (*Mi-kenaf*), *From the skirt of, the earth*—the supernal holy covering.[22]

“*We hear songs*—as is said: *He did not say, ‘Where is God, my Maker, giving songs in the night?’* (Job 35:10). *Songs*—praises uttered by Assembly of Israel before the blessed Holy One. *In the night*—in exile. *In the night*—when She is ready and present to praise the blessed Holy One. When is that? From midnight onward. Then, *songs in the night*—praises.[23]

“זמירות (*Zemirot*), *Songs*—as is said: לא תזמור (*Lo tizmor*), *You shall not prune* (Leviticus 25:4); and it is written: זמיר (*zemir*), *pruning of, tyrants* (Isaiah 25:5)—uprooting all those mighty ones. For when night enters, many *tyrants*—wardens of judgment—appear in the world, roaming through the world to accuse. From midnight onward, a certain spirit is aroused, which uproots them all and removes them, so that they do not prevail.[24]

“*We hear songs*—praises uttered by Assembly of Israel in the night. Why all this? צבי (*Tsevi*), *Glory, to the righteous*!—to couple in single coupling with the blessed Holy One [284b] and be sanctified in single holiness.[25]

“*And I said*, רזי לי רזי לי (*Razi li razi li*), *‘It is my secret! It is my secret!’*—a supernal secret, a holy secret. But, *woe is me*!—for the generation and for the world. *The treacherous have betrayed*—for they all betray Him; they betray themselves! As if it weren’t enough that they betray their very selves, the children they engender betray themselves by their falsity; so they are defective above and below.[26]

“When Isaiah saw this, he gathered those who feared sin and taught them the holy way of being sanctified with the holiness of the King, so that their children would become holy. Once they were sanctified, the children they engendered were attributed to him, as is written: *See, I and the children whom YHVH has given me as signs and portents in Israel* (Isaiah 8:18)—distinguished from the rest of the people.[27]

“*From the edge of the earth we hear songs*—when Israel entered the land with the Ark of the holy covenant

going before them, they heard from one side of the land joyful praises and the voice of celestial singers chanting in the land. Then, *Glory to the righteous!*—there was praise for Moses at that moment. For wherever the ark settled in the land, they would hear a voice saying, *This is the Torah that Moses set before the Children of Israel* (Deuteronomy 4:44).[28]

"However, *Woe is me!* For *the treacherous have betrayed*—for Israel will eventually betray the blessed Holy One and be uprooted once from the land. And because their children will clutch their falsehood, they will be uprooted a second time, until their sins are requited in another land."[29]

Take this book of teaching and place it alongside the Ark of the Covenant of YHVH אלהיכם (*eloheikhem*), *your God* (Deuteronomy 31:26). אלהיכם (*Eloheikhem*), *Your God*; אלהיך, (*elohekha*), *your God*; and not אלהינו (*eloheinu*), *our God*—for Rabbi Abba has said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah, "Regarding what is written: *For the place on which you stand is* אדמת קדש (*admat qodesh*), *holy ground* (Exodus 3:5)—*admat, land*, surely; namely *land of the living* (Psalms 142:6). And it is written: אשר אתה עומד עליו (*Asher attah omed alav*), *on which you stand*—עליו (*alav*), *above which* [*you stand*], surely! This was at the beginning; all the more so later."[30]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, "It is written: *and it shall be there as witness against you* (Deuteronomy 31:26)—*as witness*, surely, offering testimony. There are three that stood in testimony, namely Isaac's well, the lot, and the stone set up by Joshua. Yet this song is the best testimony of all."[31]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "If so, there are four."[32]

He replied, "Certainly, but as for the lot, testimony is not mentioned explicitly.[33]

"How do we know this about Isaac's well? As is written: *so that it may serve me as witness* [*that I have dug this well*] (Genesis 21:30).[34]

“The lot, as is written: על פי (*Al pi*), *By the mouth of, the lot shall its inheritance be established* (Numbers 26:56); for it said, ‘This is for Judah,’ ‘This is for Benjamin,’ and so for all of them.[35]

“Joshua’s stone, as is written: *This stone shall be witness against us* (Joshua 24:27).[36]

“And here, *It shall be there as witness against you*; and it is written: *This song shall testify before them as witness* (Deuteronomy 31:21)—it surely testifies against Israel.”[37]

It has been taught: Rabbi El’azar said, “Why is it written *Moses wrote the words of this song to their very end* (Deuteronomy 31:30)? Here one should examine. The verse should read *Moses wrote this song*; why *the words of*? And it is written *to their very end*; why so?[38]

“Well, it has been taught as follows in the mystery of words: All these words that Moses spoke were engraved with the Holy Name; and all those words came, ascending and descending, and were engraved there. Every single word came before [Moses] to be engraved by him and stood there—corresponding to what is written: *to their very end*.”[39]

Rabbi Abba said, “It is written: *the words of this song*; the verse should read *this song*. What does this intimate? Well, the song uttered by the blessed Holy One, as is said: *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s* (Song of Songs 1:1). We have already established the matter, for it has been taught: It is written *A psalm, a song* ליום השבת (*le-yom ha-shabbat*), *for the Sabbath day* (Psalms 92:1), and we have learned: *le-yom ha-shabbat, by the Sabbath day*, really—*a song* uttered by the blessed Holy One. *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s—a song* uttered by the blessed Holy One. And it is written: *the words of this song—a song* uttered by the blessed Holy One.[40]

“But this should be examined. There, שיר (*shir*), *song* (Song of Songs 1:1); whereas here, שירה (*shirah*), *song*

(Deuteronomy 31:30)—the former, male; the latter, female. Now, we have learned: 'Compared with Moses, all the other prophets are like an ape compared to a human being.' So how could they utter *shir*, and Moses utter *shirah*?[41]

"And how do we know that [*shirah*] is feminine? As is written: ועתה השירה הזאת (*Ve-anetah ha-shirah ha-zot*), *This song shall testify* (Deuteronomy 31:21).[42]

"Moses should have uttered *shir*, and they *shirah*. [285a] But this is the mystery of the matter: Moses did not speak for himself, but rather for Israel."[43]

Rabbi Shim'on said to him, "Not so! Rather, from here it is recognized that Moses is on a rung higher than all. Moses ascended from below to above, whereas they descended from above to below. He ascended from below to above, as we have learned: 'One progresses in holiness.' Moses ascended from below to above, for he uttered *shirah*—praise sung by *Matronita* to the King—and Moses was joined to the King. They descended from above to below, for they uttered *shir*, which is praise sung by the King to *Matronita*; and they were joined to *Matronita*. So by this is revealed the superiority of Moses above them all, and this accords with what is written: *Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel* הזאת השירה (*ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song* (Exodus 15:1)—the song of *Matronita*. To whom? *To YHVH* (ibid.). Consequently, here: *Moses wrote the words of ha-shirah ha-zot, this song*.[44]

"*This song shall testify* (Deuteronomy 31:21). *This song shall testify*? The verse should read *These words shall testify*. However, mystery of the matter is as we have established, for it is written: *Earth will rise up against him* (Job 20:27). Moses perceived everything; so he uttered *shirah, a song*, in order to join words to this place, so that Judgment would preside over them—as is written: *This song shall testify before them*. Why? Because it is written *For I know their devisings* (Deuteronomy, ibid.), and it is written *For I know that you will surely act ruinously and swerve*

from the way (ibid., 29). When you do so, immediately, *this song shall testify*.[45]

"Come and see: It is written *Heaven will expose his sin* —and no more—but *earth will rise up against him* (Job 20:27). By this, Judgment will be executed on whoever deserves it.[46]

"It is written: *David spoke to YHVH the words of* הזאת השירה (*ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song* (2 Samuel 22:1). It is now to the honor of David that he uttered *shirah, song*, from below to above, attaining this; and he sang this only toward the end of his days, when he was in utter perfection. What is meant by 'utter perfection'? As we have learned: 'Do not be sure of yourself until the day of your death.' And here, when did David become worthy of uttering a song from below to above? At the end of his days, when he had tranquility on all sides, as is written: *on the day that YHVH saved him from the clutches of all his enemies* (ibid.)."[47]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "What is ultimate song? As we have learned in the mystery of our Mishnah: In words and in action, so it is—from below to above, and from above to below; and then to intend wholeheartedly, binding all in one bond.[48]

"How do we know this? From Moses. At first, it is written *For the name of YHVH do I call* (Deuteronomy 32:3). What is meant by *do I call*? As is written: *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1)—*Shekhinah*. Afterward, *Hail greatness for our God* (Deuteronomy, ibid.)—the supernal King. Then he descended his rungs until here below, as is written: *Righteous and upright* (ibid., 4); then he bound the knot of faith, saying *He* (ibid.).[49]

"So a person should arrange the praise of his Lord in this pattern. From below to above, raising the glory of his Lord to the place where the flow of the depth of the well gushes forth. Then he should draw it from above to below, from that saturating stream to every single rung, down to the last rung, conveying blessings to all from above to

below. Then he must bind the knot completely—the knot of faith. Such a person honors the Holy Name, the name of his Lord. Of this is written *For those who honor Me will I honor* (1 Samuel 2:30)—*will I honor* in this world, *will I honor* in the world that is coming.[50]

"*And those who spurn Me will be disdained* (ibid.). What is meant by this? It applies to one who does not know how to unify the Holy Name, bind the knot of faith, draw blessings to where they are needed, and honor the name of his Lord. Whoever does not know how to honor the name of his Lord—better for him if he had never been created!"[51]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "*And those who spurn Me will be disdained*—one who does not know how to honor his Lord and does not concentrate on Amen. For we have learned: 'Greater is the one who responds "Amen" than the one reciting the blessing.' And we have established in the presence of Rabbi Shim'on that Amen draws blessings from the spring to the King, and from the King to *Matronita*—namely *Shekhinah*. And in the Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar: 'From א (*alef*) to מ (*mem*), and from מ (*mem*) to נ (*nun*). Once blessings reach נ (*nun*), from there they flow [285b] forth to those above and below, spreading through all. A voice proclaims: "Drink from the flow of blessings that so-and-so, servant of the Holy King, has generated!'"[52]

"When the people of Israel below are careful to respond 'Amen'—intending wholeheartedly, as it should be—many gates of blessings open above. How many benefits spread through all worlds, how much joy everywhere! What is the reward for the people of Israel, who bring this about? Their reward is in this world and in the world that is coming.

"In this world, when they are oppressed and offer prayer before their Lord, a voice proclaims through all worlds: *Open the gates, so that a righteous nation, keeping faith, may enter* (Isaiah 26:2). Do not read אמונים (*emunim*), *faith*, but rather אמנים (*amenim*), *Amens. Open the gates*—'Just as the people of Israel opens for you gates of

blessings, so now, *Open the gates* and let their prayers for deliverance be accepted.’[53]

“This is in this world. What about in that world? That when a person departs from this world, namely a person who was *keeping* to respond ‘Amen’ (What is meant by *keeping*? That is, preserving that blessing recited by the blesser and waiting for him, to respond ‘Amen’ as one should.), then his soul ascends, and they proclaim before him: ‘*Open the gates!* Just as he opened gates every day when he was *keeping amenim, Amens*.”[54]

Rabbi Yose said, “What is Amen?”

Rabbi Abba said, “We have already established all. Amen is called the spring of that flowing stream; Amen it is called, as is written: *I was by Him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*… (Proverbs 8:30)—do not read אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*, but rather אמן (*amen*), *Amen*. Sustenance of all—that stream flowing forth—is called Amen. For it has been taught: העולם מן העולם ועד (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from world to world* (Psalms 106:48)—*world* above, *world* below. Here, too: *Amen and Amen*—*Amen* above and *Amen* below. We have already established Amen by those letters.”[55]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “א (*Alef*)—depth of the well, from which all blessings flow forth and come to be. מ (*Mem*)—river flowing forth and called מם (*mem*); and we have learned that secret: open מם (*Mem*), closed מם (*mem*), as we have established: לִמרבה (*le-marbeh*), *of the increase of, dominion* (Isaiah 9:6).[56]

“Extended נון (*nun*)—totality of two נונין (*nunin*), *nun*s: extended *nun*, bent *nun*. Extended *nun*—comprising the letter ו (*vav*), comprising bent *nun*. So the totality is called נון (*nun*): נ ן ו (*vav*, final *nun, nun*).[57]

“In the mystery of the Mishnah, it has been taught as follows: ‘ו (*Vav*), male. Extended ן (*nun*), comprising male and female. Bent נ (*nun*) is comprised in the extended one.’[58]

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava: ‘The מם (*mem*) here —shorthand for מלך (*melekh*), king. Correspondingly, אמן

(*amen*): אל מלך נאמן (*el melekh ne'eman*), God, faithful King—totality of all.' That is fine, and has already been said.[59]

"It has been taught: 'Anyone who hears a blessing from the one reciting and does not focus on Amen, of him is written *Those who spurn Me will be disdained* (1 Samuel 2:30)—as is said: *to you, the priests who scorn My name* (Malachi 1:6).[60]

"When it becomes necessary, what is his punishment? Just as he did not open up blessings above, none are opened for him. Furthermore, when he leaves this world, they proclaim before him, saying 'Close the door in the face of so-and-so! Do not let him enter, do not accept him. Woe to him! Woe to his soul!'[61]

"It has been taught: The wicked of Hell all ascend into certain habitations. Many openings does Hell have, and all those openings face openings in the Garden of Eden. When those sinners who have received their punishment are brought out, those apertures open and they are drawn outside. All those openings bear names, corresponding to openings in the Garden of Eden—where every single opening is called by a name corresponding to that opening in Hell. So openings are known, corresponding to openings—those openings of the Garden of Eden.[62]

"In Hell there is the last habitation, lowest of all; and that habitation is a storey on a storey and is called *a land of* עיפתה (*eifatah*), *gloom* (Job 10:22). What is meant by *eifatah*? As is said: *It shall be square*, כפול (*kaful*), *doubled* (Exodus 28:16); and we translate: *It shall be square*, עיף (*if*), *doubled*. Here, too, *eifatah*, that is to say, *double*. That is called *nethermost Sheol* (Deuteronomy 32:22)—*Sheol* is one compartment; *nethermost*, the lower compartment. So it is called *land of eifatah, double*; *nethermost*—and it is called Avadon, so it is written *Sheol and Avadon* (Proverbs 15:11). None of those compartments is doubled—that is, they are not עייפין (*ayefin*)—except for this one.[63]

“It has been taught: Whoever descends to Avadon, [286a] which is called *nethermost*, never ascends. That one is called ‘a man who has been destroyed, lost to all worlds.’[64]

“It has been taught: To that place they lower a man who scorns to respond ‘Amen.’ Many Amens are lost to him, which he did not consider; they punish him in Hell and bring him down to the compartment that has no opening, and he is lost and never ascends from there. Thus it is written *A cloud fades and vanishes; thus, who goes down to Sheol will not come up* (Job 7:9).[65]

“No? Isn’t it written *From the belly of Sheol I cried out; You heard my voice* (Jonah 2:3)? And it is written *He brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6)! But here, *Sheol*; and there, *nethermost*. And we have established: ‘This applies to one who has done *teshuvah*; and that, to one who has not.’”[66]

Rabbi Yose said, “What is meant by the verse *For My people have committed two wrongs: Me they have forsaken —Fountain of living waters—to hew out their own cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water* (Jeremiah 2:13). *Me they have forsaken, Fountain of living waters*—a person who does not want to sanctify the name of the blessed Holy One by Amen. What is their punishment? *To hew out their own cisterns, broken cisterns*—descending to Hell, rung after rung, until they reach Avadon, called *nethermost*.[67]

“If he sanctifies the name of the blessed Holy One, focusing on it fittingly, then he ascends rung after rung, to be delighted in that World that is Coming, flowing constantly and never ceasing, as is written: אמונים (*Emunim*), *The loyal, YHVH keeps*… (Psalms 31:24).[68]

“It has been taught: Song draws blessing from above to below until blessings prevail in all worlds.”[69]

Rabbi Yose said, “The people of Israel are destined to utter a perfect song, a song comprising all other songs, as is written: *You will say on that day, ‘Praise YHVH, proclaim His*

name. Make His deeds known among the nations…’ (Isaiah 12:4).”[70]

Rabbi El’azar said, “The people of Israel are destined to chant a song from below to above, and from above to below, and to tie the knot of faith—as is written: *Then* ישיר ישראל (*yashir yisra’el*), *will Israel sing, this song* (Numbers 21:17)—it is not written *Then* שר (*shar*), *did* [*Israel*] *sing*, but rather *Then yashir, will* [*Israel*] *sing*, and similarly with all of them. *This song*—from below to above.[71]

“*Rise, O well! Sing to it!* (Numbers, ibid.). *Rise, O well!*—that is, ascend to Your place, to be joined with Your Husband. This is from below to above; afterward from above to below—for until now She is in exile with us.[72]

“*The well dug by princes* (Numbers 21:18)—for Father and Mother engendered Her above. *Delved by nobles of the nation* (ibid.)—the Patriarchs, who are called *nobles of nations* (Psalms 47:10). *Delved*—a place for the King to couple with Her with blessings. And by what is the coupling? *With a scepter* (Numbers, ibid.)—*Yesod*. *With their staves* (ibid.)—*Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. This is from above to below.[73]

“וממדבר (*U-mi-midbar*), *And from the desert, to Mattanah. And from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth* (Numbers 21:18–19)—here, complete bond, bond of faith, enduring bond wherein is all.[74]

“Of that time is written *YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His Name one* (Zechariah 14:9). And it is written *Then will our mouth fill with laughter and our tongue with glad song. Then they will say among the nations: ‘Great things has YHVH done for these’* (Psalms 126:2–3).”

פרשת האזינו

Parashat Ha'azinu

"GIVE EAR" (DEUTERONOMY 32:1–52)

COMMENTARY ON HA'AZINU

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *"I rose to open for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away, was gone* (Song of Songs 5:5–6). What is written before? *I was asleep, but my heart was awake. The voice of my beloved, knocking: 'Open for me'* (ibid., 2). *I was asleep*—Assembly of Israel said, '*I was asleep* to the commandments of Torah when I journeyed in the wilderness. *But my heart was awake*, to enter the Land to fulfill them'—for all commandments of Torah are located in the Land.[1]

"*The voice of my beloved, knocking*—Moses, who reprimanded Israel with many reproofs, [286b] in many quarrels, as is written: *These are the words* [*that Moses spoke to all the Children of Israel*…] (Deuteronomy 1:1); *You have been rebellious against YHVH. And in Horeb you infuriated YHVH*… (ibid. 9:7–8). As is written: *knocking*.[2]

"Yet although Moses reprimanded Israel, he spoke his words with love, as is written: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God. You YHVH has chosen to be for Him a treasured people*… (Deuteronomy 7:6); *You are children of YHVH your God* (ibid. 14:1); *You, cleaving to YHVH* (ibid. 4:4). Therefore, *You shall heed the voice of YHVH your God* (ibid. 27:10); *But because of YHVH's love for you*… [*He has brought you out with a strong hand*…] (ibid. 7:8). As is written: *Open*

for me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one! (Song of Songs 5:2).[3]

"What is written before? *I rose to open for my beloved…, but my beloved had turned away, was gone* (Song of Songs 5:5–6). Israel said, 'While we were about to enter the Land and accept those commandments of Torah by the hand of Moses, what is written? *But my beloved had turned away, was gone*—for it is written *Moses, servant of YHVH, died there* (Deuteronomy 34:5).[4]

"*I sought him but did not find him* (Song of Songs 5:6)—for there was never a generation like the generation of Moses, for whom the blessed Holy One enacted miracles as He did through him."[5]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "*I rose to open for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away, was gone*. This refers to the blessed Holy One; for throughout Moses' life he wanted no angel or messenger to guide along with Him. Happy is his share, for the blessed Holy One concurred with the wish of Moses! After he died, what is written? *An angel of YHVH appeared to Joshua*. And it is written: *Joshua fell on his face to the ground and prostrated himself, and he said to him, 'What does my master say to his servant?'* (Joshua 5:14).[6]

"Moses heard the holy voice of the supernal King and did not tremble—all the more so, an angel, whom he refused to consider in his heart or accept.[7]

"Come and see what is written: *He replied, 'No, for I am the commander of YHVH's army. Now have I come?'* (Joshua 5:14)—'in the days of Moses your master I came, but he did not accept me.' At that moment, Israel realized the worthiness of Moses. At that time, Israel sought the blessed Holy One, but He was not available for them as in the days of Moses—as is written: *I sought him but did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me*."[8]

Give ear, O heavens (Deuteronomy 32:1). Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Happy is the share of Moses beyond all inhabitants of the

world! Come and see what is written: *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for YHVH has spoken* (Isaiah 1:2). With Isaiah, who was farther away from the King, it is written *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth*. As for Moses, who was closer to the King, it is written *Give ear, O heavens, and let the earth hear*….[9]

"It has been taught: When Isaiah said *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth*, many dazzling guardsmen appeared, to break his head. A voice issued, saying: 'Who is this who seeks to shake worlds?' Then he opened, saying, 'It is not I nor is it mine; rather, *for YHVH has spoken*—and not I.' With Moses, what is written? *Give ear, O heavens, that I may speak*—I and no other. *That I may speak*—without fear. *And let the earth hear my mouth's utterances*—and not anyone else's. Happy is his share!"[10]

Rabbi Abba said, "In the Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar: האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ (*Ha'azinu ha-shamayim va-adabberah ve-tishma ha-arets*), *Give ear, O heavens, that I may speak, and let the earth hear*—here is hinted a name of supernal holiness."[11]

Rabbi Yose said, "Furthermore, what distinguishes Moses from Isaiah? Moses said, "*Give ear*, השמים (*ha-shamayim*), *O heavens—ha-shamayim, the heavens*, the ones well known; *ha-shamayim, the heavens*, called the Name of the blessed Holy One. *And let* הארץ (*ha-arets*), *the earth, hear*—the one well known. With Isaiah, it is written *Hear, O* שמים (*shamayim*), *heavens*—and not, *ha-shamayim, the heavens. And give ear, O* ארץ (*arets*), *earth*—and not *ha-arets, the earth*. Nevertheless, they wanted to punish him, until he said *For YHVH has spoken*. Whereas Moses said all this, and it is written *that I may speak, my mouth's utterances—Give ear, O heavens, that I may speak*…."[12]

Rabbi Yitsḥak opened, *"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men…* (Song of Songs 2:3). *Like an apple tree among the trees of*

the forest—happy is the share of Israel over all other nations! For all other nations have been given to princes appointed to rule over them; whereas holy Israel—happy is their share in this world and in the world that is coming, for the blessed Holy One gave them neither to an angel nor to any other ruler. Rather, He grasped them for His share, as is written: *Indeed, YHVH's share is His people* (Deuteronomy 32:9), and it is written *For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His treasure* (Psalms 135:4).[13]

"*Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest*—just as an apple tree is distinguished by its colors from all other trees of the field, so is the blessed Holy One markedly distinguished from all higher and lower forces. Therefore, יהוה צבאות (*YHVH Tseva'ot*), *YHVH of Hosts, is His name* (Isaiah 47:4)—He is אות (*ot*), an ensign, among the whole celestial army.[14]

"Come and see: the blessed Holy One is *like an apple*, which has three colors. Assembly of Israel is *like a rose* (Song of Songs 2:2). What is *a rose*?"[15]

Rabbi Abba said, "*A rose*, unspecified. *A rose* embraced by six leaves. *A rose* whose color is red and white—entirely two colors: red and white. So is Assembly of Israel.[16]

"The blessed Holy One is *like an apple*; Assembly of Israel is like *a rose*, and She spoke as follows: *Under the apple tree I roused you* (Song of Songs 8:5). *Under the apple tree*—[287a] where is that? Well, these are the patriarchs."[17]

Rabbi Yose said, "This is Jubilee."[18]

Rabbi Abba said, "All is fine, but these are the patriarchs that we mentioned; these are the three colors combined in the apple."[19]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "In what site is Assembly of Israel included in a rose? By those kisses of love as She cleaves to the King, She obtains two roses, as is said: *His lips are roses* (Song of Songs 5:13). Therefore She said, ישקני (*Yishaqqeni*),

Oh, that he would kiss me, with the kisses of his mouth (ibid. 1:2)—as is said: *Upon your mouth all my people* ישק (*yishaq*), *shall kiss* (Genesis 41:40)—since She is included in roses."[20]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "The blessed Holy One is called Heaven. And because He is called Heaven, all those firmaments included in this name number seven, and when they join as one they are called Heaven, and are called the Name of the blessed Holy One. Who are those firmaments? As we have learned: 'וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain; רקיע (*Raqi'a*), Firmament; שחקים (*Sheḥaqim*), Skies; זבול (*Zevul*), Loft; מעון (*Ma'on*), Dwelling; מכון (*Makhon*), Site; ערבות (*Aravot*), Clouds.' So we have learned in the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Sava."[21]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "These are *barraita*s of the House of Rav Sava, and there are many such treating all these aspects, as we have learned."[22]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "I have learned an outside *barraita*—that corresponding to all these seven crowns of the King are found seven firmaments and seven planets running back and forth. They are called by names for their names, although all those thrones of firmaments and seven planets are equivalent. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. These are equivalent to those, in concealment of words, regarding those of whom is written *Let them stand and save you—the astrologers, the stargazers* (Isaiah 47:13). All those matters are concealed, although these are not ways of Torah.[23]

"As for us, we follow ways of Torah, as is written: *He gave them names like the names his father had called them* (Genesis 26:18). We follow what the blessed Holy One spoke; and we follow Him, as is written: *Walk in His ways* (Deuteronomy 28:9)."[24]

Rabbi Yose said, "Matters are simple for the Companions and well known, although concealed."[25]

He said to him, "We have learned as follows—as Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya in our presence,

and as they taught from those *barraita*s—'In the days of King Solomon, the moon assumed fullness.' In many places, the words of those *barraita*s are well known."[26]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "I raise my hands in prayer to the supernal Holy One, that these matters may be revealed by me in that world as they were concealed in my heart. We do not follow the ways of those *barraita*s; the ways of Torah we grasp!"[27]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, "Who can you find as great in wisdom as King David and King Solomon, within this crown known in those *barraitas?* The moon King David called Righteousness, since it is his, as is written: *Open for me the gates of righteousness* (Psalms 118:19). So too, King Solomon. It is called Righteousness, and the sun—who is called My Covenant—is called Justice; and they are Thrones of Glory for the King, as is written: *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne* (ibid. 89:15). Righteous One and Righteousness, similarly, are on a single rung."[28]

It has been taught: Seven crowns, as established, are called nine; and even in those *barraita*s those seven firmaments are nine.[29]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "How long will the Companions read these words? Look, we follow the blessed Holy One, and we know matters; through us has been revealed what was not revealed to the ancient ones![30]

"From here on, all these words and all these *barraita*s—put them aside for those who have not entered and emerged. Thereby, they will come to inquire; and when they inquire, the Companions will say, 'Woe to the generation from which Rabbi Shim'on has departed!' But come and see: From here on, there will be no generation like this—nor Torah being revealed to the Companions.[31]

"Come and see: The last [of the] generation that left Egypt knew all, for Moses kept on revealing to them during

all those forty years that they were in the wilderness, as I have said."[32]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "Moses revealed this only on the day he departed from the world, as is written: *A hundred and twenty years old I am today* (Deuteronomy 31:2)—on that very day. Nevertheless, he did not speak until he was given permission, as is written: *Now, write down this song* (ibid., 19). And when he revealed, he did not say *Give ear, O Israel*, but rather *Give ear, O heavens*."[33]

Rabbi Yose said, "It is written: *this song*. Now, is it called a *song*?"[34]

Rabbi Yitsḥak replied, "Certainly, a *song*. Just as [287b] a song is drawn by the Holy Spirit from above to below, so here these words were drawn by the Holy Spirit from above to below. Therefore Moses uttered a *song*.[35]

"Come and see: All this Moses spoke, and he called to those above before uttering a word, as is written: *Give ear, O heavens*. Why all this? *For the name of YHVH do I call* (Deuteronomy 32:3). Before he spoke a word, all the worlds shook.[36]

"It has been taught: At the moment when Moses said *Give ear, O heavens*, the worlds trembled. A voice issued, saying, 'Moses, Moses, why are you shaking all? You are the son of a human being; yet because of you, worlds tremble!'[37]

"[Moses] opened, saying, '*For the name of YHVH do I call*.' At that moment, they subsided and listened to his words."

IDRA ZUTA אדרא זוטא

The Small Assembly

It has been taught:[1] On that day when the Companions gathered in the house of Rabbi Shim’on, and he was arranging his affairs to depart from the world—and before him were his son, Rabbi El’azar, Rabbi Abba, and the rest of the Companions, and the house was full—Rabbi Shim’on raised his eyes and saw that the house was filled.[2]

Rabbi Shim’on wept and said, “The other time when I was on my sickbed, Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir was in my presence. And while I was selecting my place, they extended my life until now. When I returned, fire was whirling in front of me; it has never ceased, and no person has entered without permission. Now I see that it has ceased, and look, the house is filled!”[3]

As they were sitting down, Rabbi Shim’on opened his eyes and saw what he saw; fire whirled through the house. They all left—Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba remained; the rest of the Companions sat outside.[4]

Rabbi Shim’on said to Rabbi El’azar, his son, “Go out and see if Rabbi Yitsḥak is here, for I have been surety for him. Tell him to arrange his affairs and return to me. Happy is his share!”[5]

Rabbi Shim’on rose—and sat down. He laughed aloud, saying, “Where are the Companions?”[6]

Rabbi El’azar rose and brought them in, and they sat before him.

Rabbi Shim’on raised his hands and offered a prayer, and was joyful. He said, “Those Companions who were

present at the threshing house will convene here."[7]

They all left—there remained Rabbi El'azar, his son, Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ya'akov, and Rabbi Ḥiyya. Just then, Rabbi Yitsḥak entered. Rabbi Shim'on said to him, "How fine is your share! How much joy is destined to be added to you today!"[8]

Rabbi Abba sat behind his back, and Rabbi El'azar in front of him.

Rabbi Shim'on said, "This hour is an hour of favor, and I want to enter without shame into the world that is coming. Here, holy words that I have not revealed until now, I wish to reveal in the presence of *Shekhinah*—before they say that I departed deficiently. This is why they were concealed in my heart: to enter with them into the world that is coming.[9]

"I will arrange you like this: Rabbi Abba will write; Rabbi El'azar, my son, will repeat; and the rest of the Companions will meditate in their hearts."[10]

Rabbi Abba rose from behind his back, and Rabbi El'azar, his son, remained seated.

He said to him, "Rise, my son, for someone else will sit in that place."[11]

Rabbi El'azar rose. Rabbi Shim'on enwrapped himself and sat down.[12]

He opened, saying, "*The dead do not praise Yah, nor all who go down into silence. But we will bless Yah* [*now and forever. Hallelujah*] (Psalms 115:17–18). *The dead do not praise Yah*—certainly so: those who are called *dead*. For the blessed Holy One is called 'living,' and He dwells among those called 'living,' not with those called *dead*. At the end of the verse is written *nor all who go down into* דומה (*dumah*), *silence*—all those who descend to *Dumah* will be drawn into Hell. It is different with those called 'living,' for the blessed Holy One desires their glory."[13]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "How different is this moment [288a] from the *Idra*! For in the *Idra* the blessed Holy One and His chariots convened, and now the blessed Holy One is

here accompanied by those righteous from the Garden of Eden—which did not happen in the *Idra*. The blessed Holy One seeks the honor of the righteous more than His own. As is written concerning Jeroboam, who was offering incense to idols and worshiping them—but as soon as he stretched out his hand against Iddo the prophet, it is written *His hand withered* (1 Kings 13:4). This is not written because he worshiped idols, but because he stretched out his hand against the prophet. And now, the blessed Holy One seeks their honor, and they are all coming with Him!”[14]

He said, “Look, here is Rav Hamnuna Sava, surrounded by seventy elders adorned with crowns, each one shining from the lustrous splendor of the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed! For he is coming to hear in joy these words that I will speak.”[15]

While he was seated, he said, “Look, here is Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir! Prepare his place!”[16]

The Companions who were there trembled; they rose—and seated themselves in the recesses of the house. Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba were in front of him.

Rabbi Shim’on said, “If it were as in the *Idra*, all the Companions would be speaking, I among them. But now, I alone—and all are listening to my words, those above and those below. Happy is my share this day!”[17]

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, *“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me* (Song of Songs 7:11). All the days that I have been bound to this world, I have been bound in a single bond with the blessed Holy One. Because of this, now *his desire is for me*—He and this whole holy entourage—to hear in joy concealed words and praise for the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed. Separate, separated from all, yet not separate; for all are joined to it, and it is joined to all. It itself is all! Ancient of Ancients, concealed of all concealed. Arrayed and not arrayed. Arrayed in order to sustain all; not arrayed, for it cannot be found.[18]

“When arrayed, it produces nine radiancies, flashing from it, from its array. Those radiancies go flashing and spreading in every direction—like a lofty lamp, from which lights spread in every direction; yet when one draws near those spreading lights to perceive them, nothing can be found but the lamp alone. So is the Holy Ancient One—supernal Lamp, concealed of all concealed. Nothing can be found except for those spreading radiancies, revealed and hidden. They are called the Holy Name, and therefore all is one.[19]

“As for what our colleagues have said in the ancient books—that these are rungs created in the Holy Ancient One, who is revealed through each one of them, for they are the Holy Ancient One’s enhancements—now is not the time for these matters, since I have already discussed them in the holy *Idra*. I have seen what I did not know was so, and the word has been concealed in my heart. Now I alone will testify before the King and all these truly virtuous ones who have come to hear words.[20]

“The white skull of the Head has neither beginning nor end—a colander of its balsam, expanding and glowing, from which the righteous inherit four hundred worlds of yearning in the world that is coming. From this colander of balsam, which is the white skull, drips dew every day to that *Ze’eir Anpin*, to the place called Heaven. Thereby the dead are destined to be revived in the time to come, as is written: *May God give you of the dew of heaven* (Genesis 27:28). His head is filled, and the whole Apple Orchard receives trickles of that dew.[21]

“This Holy Ancient One is concealed and hidden away; and concealed supernal Wisdom is found and is not found in that skull. Surely in this Ancient One, nothing is revealed but the head alone, for it is head of all heads. The beginning of that supernal Wisdom is concealed within it; and it is

called Supernal Brain, Concealed Brain, a brain that is tranquil and quiet; and no one knows it except itself.[22]

"Three heads are engraved, one within the other, one above the other. One head is Concealed Wisdom, covered and unopened. This Concealed Wisdom is head of all heads of other wisdoms.[23]

"The Supernal Head is the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed. The Head of all Heads—[288b] a head that is not a head. It is unknown and unknowable what is inside this head, since it can be grasped by neither Wisdom nor Understanding. To this is applied: *Flee to your place!* (Numbers 24:11); *the living beings darting back and forth* (Ezekiel 1:14). Therefore the Holy Ancient One is called *Ayin*, Nothingness, since *Ayin* depends upon it.[24]

"All those hairs and all those strands hang from the Concealed Brain, all of them symmetrically smooth, and the nape is not seen. All because this Ancient One is unified; all is in joy, never changing from Compassion.[25]

"It is found in thirteen, for this Concealed Wisdom divides within it three times into four; and He, the Ancient One, contains them, reigning over all.[26]

"One path shining in the middle of the hairs issuing from the brain is the path by which the righteous shine in the world that is coming, as is written: *The path of the righteous is like gleaming light* (Proverbs 4:18). Of this is written *Then you will delight upon YHVH* (Isaiah 58:14). From this path shines all other paths that depend on *Ze'eir Anpin*.[27]

"This Ancient One is סבא דסבין (*Sava de-Savin*), Eldest of Elders, Origin of Origins—supernal Crown on high, by which all crowns and diadems are adorned. Lamps are illumined, glowing; and He Himself is the supernal Lamp—hidden, unknown. All other lamps are kindled and illumined by Him.[28]

"This Ancient One exists with three heads, which are comprised in one head, and that Supernal Head is above,

above. Since the Holy Ancient One is marked by three, all other shining lamps are in threes.[29]

"Furthermore, the Holy Ancient One is marked by two, entirety of the Ancient One by two: highest Crown of all above—Head of all heads—and the one above this, who is not known. Similarly, all the other concealed lamps are in twos.[30]

"Furthermore, the Ancient One is marked and concealed by one—He is one and He is all. So all the other lamps are linked, turning into one; they are one, and that is all.[31]

"The forehead that is revealed in the Holy Ancient One is called רצון (*ratson*), Will. For this Supernal Head—concealed, concealed on high, unknown—extends one potentate, mild and beautiful, that is included in the forehead. Since it is the Will of all wills, it is arrayed in the forehead, revealed in luster. When this is revealed, Will of wills prevails through all worlds, and all prayers below are accepted, and the face of *Ze'eir Anpin* shines, and all is in Compassion.[32]

"Because all judgments are hidden away and subjugated, on Sabbath at the time of *minḥah*—which is when all judgments are aroused—this forehead is revealed, all judgments are subdued, and Compassion prevails. So [Sabbath] is without Judgment, both above and below. Even the fire of Hell sinks in its place, and the wicked have rest.[33]

"Therefore a soul of joy is added on Sabbath, and a person should rejoice in three Sabbath meals, for all faith—entirety of faith—is found therein. A person should arrange and eat three meals of faith, rejoicing in them."[34]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "I attest before all those here that through all my days I have never neglected these three meals, by virtue of which I have not been compelled to fast on Sabbath—even on other days I haven't had to, much less on Sabbath. For whoever attains them attains complete faith. One is the meal of *Matronita*, one is the meal of the King,

and one is the meal of the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed. In that world, he will attain these.[35]

"When this Will is revealed, all judgments shine and are subjugated by their chains.[36]

"The enhancement of the Holy Ancient One is arrayed in one arrangement, totality of all enhancements. That is supernal Concealed Wisdom, entirety of all the rest; and this is called supernal Eden, concealed of all concealed—brain of the Ancient One. This brain expands in every direction; from it spreads another Eden, hewn out of this one.[37]

"When that [289a] concealed head in the head of the Ancient One, which is not known, extends a potentate to illuminate, it strikes this brain, which is engraved and illuminated by many lights. It generates and traces in the luster in this forehead, designing a certain light called Will. This Will extends below into the beard, to the place where it settles in the beard, and it is called Supernal *Ḥesed*. When this Will is revealed, masters of Judgment look upon it and are overwhelmed.[38]

"The eyes of the head of the Holy Ancient One—two, equivalent to one; watching constantly, never sleeping, as is written: *Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Guardian of Israel* (Psalms 121:4)—Holy Israel. Therefore, no brows over the eye, nor eyelid.[39]

"That brain is engraved and shines with three whites of the eye. In this white, the eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin* bathe, as is written: *bathing in milk* (Song of Songs 5:12); for the primal white and the other whites bathe and illumine the other lamps.[40]

"The brain is called 'fountain of blessing,' the fountain from which all blessings derive. Since this brain glows with three whites of the eye, it is called *He that has a good eye* יְבוֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed* (Proverbs 22:9)—blessing

depends on it, for in the brain are revealed the whites of the eyes.[41]

"When this eye gazes upon *Ze'eir Anpin*, all worlds are in joy. This eye is right; eyes of the one below are right and left —two of two colors.[42]

"In the Concealment of the Book we have learned that there is higher י (*yod*) and lower י (*yod*), higher ה (*he*) and lower ה (*he*), higher ו (*vav*) and lower ו (*vav*). All these higher ones depend upon the Ancient One, and the lower ones are in *Ze'eir Anpin*—not dependent but actually there. They are dependent on the Ancient One, for the name of the Ancient One is concealed from all and cannot be found; but these letters are dependent on the Ancient One so that all those below may exist, for otherwise they would not.[43]

"Therefore the Holy Name is concealed and revealed—that which is concealed, corresponding to the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all; and that which is revealed, for the sake of the one revealed, dependent on *Ze'eir Anpin*. Consequently, all blessings require the concealed and the revealed.[44]

"These concealed dependent letters surely depend upon the Ancient One, depending upon the skull, forehead, and eyes. Why is י (*yod*) dependent? To sustain י (*yod*) below.[45]

The nose. In this nose, through the nostril of an armoire within, blows the breath of life to *Ze'eir Anpin*. And in this nose, in the nostril of an armoire, is suspended ה (*he*), sustaining another *he* below. This breath issues from the Concealed Brain and is called 'breath of life.' By this breath, people are destined to know Wisdom in the time of King Messiah, as is written: *The breath of YHVH will alight upon him: a breath of wisdom and understanding* (Isaiah 11:2).[46]

"This nose is life on all sides—complete joy, tranquility, health. Whereas the nose of *Ze'eir Anpin* is as we have established, for it is written: *Smoke rose from His nostrils*

(2 Samuel 22:9). While here is written *For My praise*, אחטם (*eḥetom*), *I restrain the nose, for you*… (Isaiah 48:9).[47]

"In the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava, he established ה (*he*) in the mouth. But the *he* here is not established so, nor do we need it, although it amounts to one. Yet, upon *he* Judgment depends, and Judgment depends upon the nose; and it is written *Smoke rose from His nostrils*…. The root of wrath depends upon the nose.[48]

"All the enhancements of the Ancient One are arrayed in the calm and concealed brain. All the enhancements of *Ze'eir Anpin* are arrayed in the lower brain, as is written: *All of them You made in wisdom* (Psalms 104:24). It is surely the principle of all. What is the difference between ה (*he*) and *he*? From this *he* is aroused Judgment, whereas that *he*—Compassion within Compassion.[49]

In the beard of the Holy Ancient One hangs all, Glory of all. It is called מזלא (*mazzala*), flowing destiny, of all. From that beard—*mazzala*, most glorious of all—flow those above and those below. All gaze upon that *mazzala*. Upon this *mazzala* depends the life of all; upon this *mazzala* depend heaven and earth, rains of favor, nourishment of all. By this *mazzala*, watching over all. Upon this *mazzala* depend all higher and lower forces.[50] [289b]

"Thirteen flows of fine anointing oil derive from the beard of this glorious *mazzala*, and they all stream to *Ze'eir Anpin*. Do not say 'all'; rather, nine of them appear, to subdue judgments.[51]

"When this *mazzala* hangs evenly to the navel, all holiest of holies depend upon it. In this *mazzala* spreads an expansion of the supernal vaporous cluster—that Head of all Heads, who is unknown and unrecognized, not known by those above or those below. Thus all depends upon this *mazzala*.[52]

"In this beard the three heads that I mentioned expand, all converging in this *mazzala* and appearing there. So all that

is most precious depends upon this *mazzala*. These letters dependent on this Ancient One are all suspended in this beard and converge in this *mazzala*, suspended there, to sustain other letters. For if these letters did not ascend, those other ones would not endure. Therefore, when the need arose, Moses said, יהוה יהוה (*YHVH YHVH*) (Exodus 34:6)—twice, a pausal sign interposing between them—for all depends upon *mazzala*. By this *mazzala*, those above and those below are put to shame, cringing before it. Happy is the share of one who attains this![53]

"This Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, is not mentioned and is not found. Since it is the highest head of all those above, only a single head without a body is mentioned, sustaining all. This is hidden, concealed, and treasured away from all.[54]

"Its enhancements are arrayed in that most concealed brain, which expands, arranging all, and Supernal *Ḥesed* emerges. Supernal *Ḥesed* expands and arranges, and all is included in this Concealed Brain.[55]

"When the whiteness of this radiance is arrayed, the one that strikes, strikes this brain, and it is illumined. And from the glorious *mazzala* derives another brain, expanding into thirty-two paths.[56]

"When radiance shines from the glorious *mazzala*, three supernal heads are illumined—two heads and one including them. Deriving from the *mazzala*, they are included in it. From here the glory of the beard begins to be revealed—the concealed *mazzala*—and they are enhanced.

"Just as three heads are crowned in the Holy Ancient One, so all consists of three heads. And when they are illumined, they all depend upon one another—upon three heads: one on each side, and one including them.[57]

"Now, you might say, 'Who is the Holy Ancient One?' Come and see: Above is the one not known, not recognized, not designated. It encompasses all, and two heads are

included in It; then all else is arranged so. That one is not in numeration, nor in category, nor in fervent reckoning. Of this is said *I will guard my ways from sinning with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle on my mouth…* (Psalms 39:2).[58]

"The place where beginning derives from the Ancient One, illumined by the *mazzala*, is the radiance of *Ḥokhmah*—expanding in thirty-two directions and issuing from that Concealed Brain, from the radiance within. That which the Holy Ancient One shines into *Ḥokhmah* is the beginning of what is revealed. It becomes three heads, with one head encompassing them. These three expand in *Ze'eir Anpin*, and from these all shine.[59]

"This Wisdom is engraved and generates one river, flowing forth to water the Garden. It enters the head of *Ze'eir Anpin* and is formed into one brain, and from there it extends and flows through the whole body, watering all those plants, as is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10).[60]

"This Wisdom is engraved, and it extends and enters the head of *Ze'eir Anpin*, and is formed into another brain.[61]

"That other one—the radiance emanating from it. These two are engraved and join into one head of the depth of the well, as is written: בדעתו (*Be-da'to*), *By His knowledge, the depths burst open* (Proverbs 3:20). Entering the head of *Ze'eir Anpin*, it is formed into another brain; and from there it extends and enters within, within the body—filling all those chambers and porticos of the body, as is written: ובדעת (*Uv-da'at*), *And by knowledge, rooms are filled* (ibid. 24:4).[62]

"These shine from the radiance of that supernal Concealed Brain, which shines into the *mazzala*—Holy Ancient One. All depend upon one another and are linked with each other, until it is known that all is one, and all is the Ancient One, [290a] and nothing is separate from it.[63]

"These three lights illuminate three others, called Fathers, and these Fathers illumine the Sons, and all shines

from one place. When this Ancient One—Will of Wills—is revealed, all shines, and all exists in perfect joy.[64]

"This Eden is drawn from supernal Eden, concealed of all concealed; and from this Eden is called 'beginning.' In the Ancient One, beginning and end do not apply, nor do they exist. And since it has neither beginning nor end, it is not called You—because it is concealed and not revealed—and it is called He. From the place where beginning is found, it is called You, and it is called Father—as is written: *For You are our father* (Isaiah 63:16).[65]

"In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Sava: 'The principle of all is that *Ze'eir Anpin* is called You, the Holy Ancient One is called He.' This is fine; yet now we apply [You] to the place where beginning is found, although it is concealed: from there is beginning, and it is called You. It is Father of Fathers. And this Father issues from the Holy Ancient One, as is written: והחכמה מאין תמצא (*Ve-ha-ḥokhmah me-ayin timmatse*), *Wisdom comes into being out of nothingness* (Job 28:12). Therefore it is not known.[66]

"Come and see: *Elohim understands its way* (ibid., 23)—*understands its way*, really! However, *and He knows its place* (ibid.)—*its place*, really, and of course, *its way*; and of course, that Wisdom concealed in the Holy Ancient One.[67]

"This Wisdom is the beginning of all. From it expand thirty-two paths—paths, not ways. Of them is Torah composed, of twenty-two letters and ten utterances. This Wisdom is Father of Fathers, and in this Wisdom appear beginning and end. Thus, Higher Wisdom and Lower Wisdom. When Wisdom expands, He is called Father of Fathers. All is consummated only by this, as is written: *All of them You made in wisdom* (Psalms 104:24)."[68]

Rabbi Shim'on raised his hands and rejoiced. He said, "Surely it is time, and all is demanded in this hour.[69]

"Come and see: When the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, sought to array all as male and female, in

the place where male and female were combined they did not endure—rather, in another existence of male and female.[70]

"This Wisdom, principle of all—when it emerged and shone from the Holy Ancient One, it shone solely as male and female. This Wisdom expanded and was found to be male and female: *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), Father; *Binah* (Understanding), Mother. *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*—evenly balanced, male and female. Because of them, all exists as male and female; were it not for this, they would not endure.[71]

"This beginning is Father of all, Father of all fathers. They joined to one another—*Ḥokhmah*, Father; *Binah*, Mother. And it is written: כִּי אֵם לִבִינָה תִקרָא (*ki em la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, you will call Binah 'Mother'* (Proverbs 2:3). When they joined, they generated offspring, and faith spread.[72]

"In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Yeiva Sava, it is taught as follows: What is *Binah*? Well, when one joined the other—י (*yod*) with ה (*he*)—She became pregnant and produced a son, and they generated offspring. Thus, בינה (*Binah*), Understanding—בן י ה (*Ben yod he*), Son of *Yod He*. Perfection appears: the two of them uniting and the Son within them. Summation of all: in their array appears complete perfection—Father and Mother, Son and Daughter.[73]

"These matters have been conveyed only to the holy ones of the Most High, who have entered and emerged—who know the ways of the blessed Holy One, who do not deviate from them to the right or the left, as is written: *For the ways of YHVH are right; the righteous walk in them, while transgressors stumble in them* (Hosea 14:10). Happy is the share of one who is worthy of knowing His ways and not erring in them! For these matters are concealed, and the holy ones of the Most High are illumined by them as one is illumined by the radiance of a lamp. These matters have not been transmitted to anyone who has not entered and

emerged; for whoever has not entered and emerged—better for him if he had never been created! For it is revealed before the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, that these words shine in my heart in the fullness of love and awe of the blessed Holy One. And as for these sons of mine here, I know that they have entered and emerged from these matters, though not all of them. Now they have been illumined completely, as should be. Happy is my share with them in that world!"[74]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "All that I have said about the Holy Ancient One, and all about *Ze'eir Anpin*, is all one. It is all—all one entity—with no [290b] separation pertaining. Blessed be He; Blessed be His Name forever and ever.[75]

"Come and see: This beginning, called Father, is included in י (*yod*), which depends upon the holy *mazzala*. So it is the most concealed of all letters. *Yod* includes other letters. *Yod*, beginning and end of all.[76]

"And that river flowing forth is called the World that is Coming—coming constantly and never ceasing. This is the delight of the righteous: attaining this World that is Coming constantly to the Garden, ceaselessly. Of it is written *like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11). That World that is Coming is created by י (*yod*), as is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10). *Yod* includes two letters.[77]

"In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav we have learned: 'Why are ו ד (*vav, dalet*) included in יוד (*yod*)? Well, the planting in the Garden is called ו ד (*vav, dalet*); the Garden is called ו (*vav*). And there is another Garden, which is ד (*dalet*); and *dalet*, which is *four*, is watered by this *vav*. This corresponds to the mystery that is written: *A river issues from Eden*—who is *Eden*? Supernal Wisdom, which is *yod*. *To water the garden*—*vav*. *And from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*—*dalet*. All is included in יוד (*yod*).[78]

“‘Therefore it is called Father of all, Father of Fathers. It is called Beginning of all, House of all, Brain—י (*yod*), beginning and end of all, as is written: *All of them You made in wisdom* (Psalms 104:24).[79]

“‘In its place it is not revealed and is not known. Once it conjoins with Mother, it is hinted at within Mother. So Mother is principle of all—known and alluded to. Beginning and end of all is called Wisdom, in which is concealed totality of all, totality of the Holy Name.’[80]

“Until now, I have hinted and not spoken, all these days. But now, aspects are carved. י (*Yod*) is composed of this Wisdom. ה (*He*) is Mother, whom we call בינה (*Binah*), Understanding. ו ה (*Vav, he*) are two children adorned by Mother. We have already learned that *Binah* is composed of all: י (*yod*) joining Mother, and they bring forth ב ן (*bet, nun; ben*), a son. Thus, בינה (*Binah*)—Father and Mother, י ה (*yod, he*); ב ן (*bet, nun; ben*), a son, amid them.[81]

“Now She is called תבונה (*Tevunah*), for all is included in these letters: בן בת (*ben, bat*), Son, Daughter, who are ו ה (*vav, he*)—all in one whole, namely תבונה (*Tevunah*).[82]

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava it is said: ‘The first enhancement revealed by King Solomon—when he said *Oh, you are beautiful,* רעיתי (*ra’yati*), *my beloved!* (Song of Songs 4:1)—derives from here. The second enhancement he called *bride* (ibid., 8), who is Female below.’[83]

“As for those who say ‘Both of them refer to this Female below, being free for interpretation’—not so! For the first ה (*he*) is not called *bride*, whereas the last *he* is, at certain times—many times—since there are many times when the Male does not unite with Her and withdraws from Her. Of then is written [*Do not approach*] *a woman in her menstrual impurity*… (Leviticus 18:19). At the time when the Female is purified, and the Male desires to unite with Her, then She is called *bride*—a real bride![84]

“But as for this Mother, the desire of them both is eternal. As one they emerge, as one they abide; one is not

detached from the other, and one does not withdraw from the other. Therefore it is written: *A river issues from Eden—issues*, certainly, ceaselessly! And it is written *like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11). Consequently it is written רעיתי (*ra'yati*), *my beloved* (Song of Songs 4:1)—abiding ברעותא (*bi-r'uta*), in desire, in companionship, in complete oneness. But here, *bride*—for when the Male comes to unite with Her, She is a *bride*, coming as a real bride![85]

"Therefore Solomon described two enhancements of Females. The enhancement of the first he concealed, since She is concealed; and the enhancement of the second he explained further, not concealing so much. Afterward he linked all praise to the one above, as is written: *One alone is she to her mother, pure to her who bore her* (Song of Songs 6:9). Because this Mother is adorned with the crown of all, and the desire of י (*yod*) toward Her never ceases, into Her domain has been given all liberation of slaves, complete liberation of all, all liberation of sinners, purifying all—as is written: *For on this day He will effect atonement for you, to purify you* (Leviticus 16:30). And it is written *You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim release…. For she is Jubilee; she shall be holy* [*for you*] (Leviticus 25:10, 12). What is יובל (*yovel*), *Jubilee*? As is said: *spreading its roots by* יובל (*yuval*), *a stream* (Jeremiah 17:8)—on account of that river that is coming, flowing forth ceaselessly.[86]

"It is written: [291a] כי אֵם לבינה תקרא (*Ki em la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, you will call Binah 'Mother,' and raise your voice* לתבונה (*la-tevunah*), *to discernment* (Proverbs 2:3). Since [Scripture] says *Binah*, why does it say *Tevunah*? Well, all is as I said. Which of them is superior? *Binah* is superior to *Tevunah*. בינה (*Binah*)—Father, Mother, and Son. Father, י (*yod*); Mother, ה (*he*); בן (*ben*), Son, amid them. תבונה (*Tevunah*) is composed entirely of children: בן (*ben*), Son; בת (*bat*), Daughter—ו (*vav*), ה (*he*). And Father and Mother are not found—rather, Mother crouches over them, yet is unrevealed. Thus, the

entirety of two children is called *Tevunah*, whereas the entirety of Father, Mother, and Son is called *Binah*. When one wishes to include all, they are included in this.[87]

"This Father, Mother, and Son are called *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Da'at*. Because this Son obtains the insignia of His Father and His Mother, He is called *Da'at*, for He is testimony to them both. This Son is called Firstborn, as is written: *My son, My firstborn, Israel* (Exodus 4:22). Since He is Firstborn, He obtains a double share—and when He is increased in crowns, three shares. In either case—two shares or three shares—all is the same thing. Both this and that are simply so: the inheritance of His Father and Mother He receives.[88]

"What is the inheritance? Crowns that were treasured away within them and bequeathed to this Son. From the side of His Father, there was one crown hidden within Him called *Ḥesed*; and from the side of Mother, one crown called *Gevurah*. All of them adorn His head, and He grasps them.[89]

"When this Father and Mother shine upon them, they are all called Tefillin of the Head. This Son inherits all and obtains all; and this one gives to the Daughter, and the Daughter is nourished by Him. In any case, from here we learn that the son inherits from his father and mother, not the daughter; and by him the daughter is nourished, as is written: *There was food for all in him* (Daniel 4:9).[90]

"Now, if you say, 'All this and that are called Righteous One and Righteousness'—they are as one, and all is one.[91]

"This Father and Mother are enfolded in and joined with one another, Father being more concealed. All is linked to the Holy Ancient One, dependent upon the holy *mazzala*, most glorious of all.[92]

"This Father and Mother prepare the house, as I have said—as is written: *By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant wealth* (Proverbs 24:3–4). And it is written *For it is pleasant if you keep them*

in your belly (ibid. 22:18). These are the principle of all, as I have said, dependent upon the glorious *mazzala*."[93]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "In the *Idra* I did not reveal all, and all these matters were concealed until now. And I wanted to conceal them for the world that is coming, because there we are asked a question, as is written: *It will be the faithfulness of your times, stronghold of salvation—wisdom and knowledge—the awe of YHVH is his treasure* (Isaiah 33:6). *Wisdom* is asked of one. Yet now, the will of the blessed Holy One is for this. Surely, without shame I will enter His palace![94]

"It is written: *For* אל דעות (*El de'ot*), *a God of knowledges, is YHVH* (1 Samuel 2:3). He is דעת (*Da'at*); *Da'at* He inherits; by *Da'at* all His palaces are filled, as is written: ובדעת (*Uv-da'at*), *and by knowledge, rooms are filled* (Proverbs 24:4). Therefore, the other *Da'at* is not revealed, for it flows secretly within Him and is included in the brain, in the whole body—*for El de'ot, a God of knowledges*.[95]

"In the Book of *Aggadta* we have learned: *For* אל דעות (*El de'ot*), *a God of knowledges*—do not read דעות (*de'ot*), *knowledges*, but rather עדות (*edut*), *testimony*, for He is testimony of all, testimony of two shares, as is said: *He established a testimony in Jacob* (Psalms 78:5). Although this matter has been established in the Book of Concealment from another perspective, there in its place it is perfect. Thus all is fine; and it is all, when the matter is concealed.[96]

"This Father and Mother encompass all, concealed within them; and they are concealed in the holy *mazzala*, Ancient of all Ancients. In Him they are concealed; in Him they are included. He is all; all is He. Blessed be He; Blessed be His Name forever and ever.[97]

"All the words of the *Idra* are fitting, and all of them are holy words—words that do not deviate to the right or to the left. All of them, words concealed for those who have entered and emerged—and all are so. Until now these

words have been concealed, for I feared to reveal; now they have been revealed! Yet it is revealed before the Holy Ancient One that I have not acted for my own glory or for the glory of my father's house, but rather so that I will not enter His palace in shame.[98]

"Furthermore, I see that the blessed Holy One and all these truly virtuous ones here confirm what I am doing. For I see all of them rejoicing in this, my wedding celebration; and all of them are invited, [291b] in that world, to my wedding celebration! Happy is my share!"[99]

[Rabbi Abba said: When the Holy Lamp, the Supernal Lamp, completed this utterance, he raised his hands and wept—and laughed. He wanted to reveal one matter. He said, "I have toiled over and been troubled by this matter all my days, and now they are not giving me permission!" Summoning his strength, he sat up, murmured with his lips, and bowed three times. No one could look at his place, certainly not at him. He said:][100]

"Mouth, mouth, who has attained so much, your spring has not dried up! Your spring flows forth ceaselessly. Over you I proclaim *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10); and it is written *like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11).[101]

"Now I testify that all the days I have existed, I yearned to see this day, though my desire was not attained. For with this crown, this day is adorned. Now I wish to reveal words in the presence of the blessed Holy One, for all of them crown my head. This day will not hasten to enter its place, as another day, for the whole day is in my control. Now I begin to reveal matters so that I will not enter shamefully into the world that is coming. Here, I begin and speak.[102]

"It is written: *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Love and truth go before Your presence* (Psalms 89:15). Whoever is wise will contemplate this, to see the ways of the Supernal Holy One, the judgments of the Supernal Holy One—judgments of truth,

judgments adorned with supernal crowns. For I have already said that all the lamps shining from the Supernal Lamp, concealed of all concealed, are illuminating rungs. By the light of every single rung is revealed what is revealed. Those lights are joined, light to light, shining into one another, inseparable from each other.[103]

"The light of every single lamp—called Crowns of the King, Adornments of the King—shines from and is joined to that light within, within, not separating outward. So all ascends to one rung, all is crowned by one element—no separating one from another. It and its name are one.[104]

"The light that is revealed is called Garment of the King. The light within, within—in that light is the one who is inexpressible and unrevealed. All those lamps and all those lights shine from the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, the Supernal Lamp. Upon contemplating, all the lights spreading—there is nothing but the Supernal Lamp, hidden and unrevealed.[105]

"Among those garments of glory—garments of truth, adornments of truth, lamps of truth—are two lamps, perfection of the King's throne, called Righteousness and Justice. They are the beginning and consummation, and by these are adorned all judgments above and below. All is concealed in Justice, and Righteousness is nourished by this Justice.[106]

"Sometimes She is called מלכי־צדק מלך שלם (*Malki-tsedeq melekh shalem*), *Melchizedek king of Salem* (Genesis 14:18). And when judgments are aroused from Justice, they are completely compassion, completely perfect; for this one assuages Righteousness, and judgments are refined, all descending to the world in perfection, in compassion. Then the hour is sanctified, for Male and Female are united, and all worlds are in compassionate joy.[107]

"But when sins of the world proliferate and the sanctuary is defiled and the Male moves afar from the Female and the mighty Serpent begins to be aroused—woe

to the world, which is then nourished by this Righteousness! Many ravaging bands of stingers are aroused in the world; many righteous ones are removed from the world—because the Male moves afar from the Female, and Justice does not approach this Righteousness. Of this is written *Some are swept away without justice* (Proverbs 13:23), for Justice is far from Righteousness, who is not assuaged, and Righteousness suckles from another place.[108]

"Of this King Solomon said: *Everything have I seen in the days of my breath* (Ecclesiastes 7:15). *My breath*—a breath of the breaths above, called 'faces of the King.' The phrase *my breath* refers to Righteousness, the Holy Kingdom; for when She is aroused in Her judgments, it is written *a righteous one perishing in his righteousness* (ibid.). Why? Because Justice has moved afar from Her, and so, *some are swept away without justice*.[109]

"Come and see: When a sublime virtuous person is found in the world—a beloved of the blessed Holy One—even when Righteousness is aroused, the world can be saved for his sake. The blessed Holy One seeks to honor him, so he does not fear [292a] Judgment. But if that virtuous one does not remain steadfast and becomes afraid, then even Justice he fears and cannot endure—how much more so, Righteousness![110]

"King David said at first, '*Test me, O YHVH, and try me* (Psalms 26:2); for I am not afraid of any judgments—even of this Righteousness, especially since I am linked to it.' What is written? *As for me*, בצדק (*be-tsedeq*), *in righteousness, I will behold Your face* (Psalms 17:15)—*be-tsedeq, by righteousness*, surely! 'For I am not afraid to undergo its judgments.' After he sinned, he was afraid even of Justice, as is written: *Do not enter into justice with Your servant* (Psalms 143:2).[111]

"Come and see: When this צדק (*tsedeq*), Righteousness, is assuaged by Justice, it is called צדקה (*tsedaqah*), and the world

is sweetened by kindness and filled with it, as is written: *He loves tsedaqah, righteousness, and justice. The kindness of YHVH fills the earth* (Psalms 33:5).[112]

"I testify that all my days I have been distressed for the world, that it not encounter the judgment of Righteousness and be consumed by its flames—as is written: *She eats and wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong'* (Proverbs 30:20).[113]

"From here on, everyone is in the mouth of a deep pit. Now, surely in this generation there are righteous ones; yet there are few who will rise to defend the flock from all four directions.[114]

"Until here, words have been interlinked; and matters concealed in the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, have been expounded—how these are connected with those. From here on, matters of *Ze'eir Anpin*—those not revealed in the *Idra*, those concealed in my heart and not arranged there. Until now, words have been concealed, yet all clear. Happy is my share and that of those who receive this inheritance, as is written: *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* (Psalms 144:15).[115]

"As I have established: Father and Mother are linked to the Ancient One, to its enhancements; for they depend upon the most concealed brain and are connected with it. Even though the Holy Ancient One is arrayed alone, when matters are contemplated, all is the Ancient One alone—It is and It will be—and all these enhancements are linked with It, concealed within It, inseparable from It. The Concealed Brain is not revealed and does not depend upon It. Father and Mother issue from this brain, depend upon it, and are linked with it. *Ze'eir Anpin* depends upon the Holy Ancient One and is linked with It. I have already established these matters in the *Idra*.[116]

"Happy is the share of one who has entered and emerged and knows the ways, not deviating to the right or to the left. As for one who has not entered and emerged,

better for him if he had never been created! And it is written: *For the ways of YHVH are right; the righteous walk in them*, [*while transgressors stumble in them*] (Hosea 14:10).”[117]

Rabbi Shim’on said, “All my days I have been contemplating—and behold this verse: *In YHVH does my soul glory. Let the humble hear and rejoice* (Psalms 34:3)! And now the whole verse is fulfilled. *In YHVH* תתהלל נפשי (*tithallel nafshi*), *does my soul glory*—surely, for my soul is joined to Him, kindled by Him, cleaving to Him, striving; and by this striving, it will ascend to its place.[118]

“*Let the humble hear and rejoice*—all these righteous and virtuous ones who have come with the blessed Holy One; all of them are listening and rejoicing. Behold now, the holy academy! Thus, *Exalt YHVH with me; let us extol His name together* (Psalms 34:4).[119]

“It is written: *For look, the kings have assembled, passed onward together* (ibid. 48:5)—as is written: *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom* (Genesis 36:31)—in the place where judgments adhere.[120]

“*Passed onward together*—as is written: *And* [so-and-so] *died…. and* [so-and-so] *died…. and* [so-and-so] *reigned in his stead* (ibid., 33–39).[121]

“*It is they who have seen and so been astounded; they were terrified, panicked* (Psalms 48:6); for they did not endure in their places, since the adornments of the King had not been arrayed, and the Holy City and its walls had not been prepared—as is written: *As we heard, so we see, in the city of YHVH Tseva’ot, in the city of our God. May God make it stand firm forever! Selah* (ibid., 9). For none of them endured; but this one endured now alongside the Male, who dwelt with Her, as is written: *And Hadar reigned in his stead; the name of his city was Pau, and the name of his wife was Mehetabel daughter of Matred daughter of*

Me-zahab (Genesis 36:39)—מי זהב (*Mei zahav*), *Waters of Gold*, surely, as we have established in the *Idra*.[122]

"Actually, in the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Hamnuna, it is said: *And Hadar reigned in his stead*—הדר (*Hadar*), *Hadar*, surely, as is said: *fruit of* עץ הדר (*ets hadar*), *a majestic tree* (Leviticus 23:40). *And the name of his wife was Mehetabel*—as is said: *fronds of palms* (ibid.), and it is written *The righteous one flourishes like a palm tree* (Psalms 92:13), for it is male and female.[123]

"This one is called Daughter—*daughter of* מטרד (*Matred*), *Matred*; daughter of the place that all אטרדין (*ittaredin*), are engrossed, in trying to grasp. It is called Father; and it is written *No human knows its worth, and it cannot be found in the land of the living* (Job 28:13).[124]

"Alternatively, daughter of Mother, to whose side judgments adhere, טרדין (*taredin*), harassing, [292b] all.[125]

"*Daughter of* מי זהב (*Mei zahav*), *Waters of Gold*—suckling from two faces, shining in two colors: in Love, in Judgment.[126]

"Before the world was created, they did not gaze face-to-face; and therefore primordial worlds were destroyed, and primordial worlds were fashioned in disarray. That which is disarrayed is called 'flashing sparks'—like a blacksmith pounding an iron tool, scattering sparks in every direction; and those flying forth flash and scintillate and are immediately extinguished. These are called Primordial Worlds. Thus they were destroyed and did not endure, until the Holy Ancient One was arrayed and the Artisan proceeded to His artistry.[127]

"Regarding this, we have learned in our Mishnah that a spark emitted scintillas upon scintillas in 320 directions; and those scintillas are called Primordial Worlds, which immediately perished. Afterward the Artisan proceeded to His artistry, and was configured as male and female; and

these scintillas were extinguished and died, and now all endured.[128]

"From the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness issued a spark—a mighty hammer striking, scattering scintillas: primordial worlds. It mingled with pure air, and they were sweetened by one another when Father and Mother united.[129]

"That Father is spirit treasured away in the Ancient of Days. In Him was concealed this air, absorbing the spark that issued from the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness and was hidden in the belly of Mother. When the two of them conjoined, merging with one another, a single mighty skull emerged, expanding in its directions—one to this side, and one to the other.[130]

"Just as the Holy Ancient One includes three heads in one, so all is arranged with three heads, as I have said.[131]

"Into this skull drips dew from the White Head, which it catches. That dew appears in two colors, and from it is nourished the Holy Apple Orchard. From this dew of the skull, manna is ground for the righteous for the world that is coming; and by it the dead are destined to be revived.[132]

"The manna issuing from this dew never appeared except at the time when Israel wandered in the wilderness, and the Ancient of All nourished them from this place—which never happened afterward. As is written: *Look, I am about to rain down for you bread from heaven* (Exodus 16:4)—*from heaven*!—as is said: *May God give you of the dew of heaven* (Genesis 27:28).[133]

"This pertains to that time. As for other times, we have learned: 'Human sustenance is as difficult for the blessed Holy One [as splitting the Red Sea].' In fact, it depends upon *mazzala*, destiny—upon *mazzala*, surely! In any case, 'Children, life, and sustenance do not depend on merit but on *mazzala*.' All depends upon this *mazzala*, as we have established.[134]

“Ninety million worlds journey with this skull and are supported by it, and this pure air is included in all. Since it is composed of all, and all is included in it, His face expands in two directions—in two lights, comprising all.[135]

“When His face gazes upon the face of the Holy Ancient One, all is called ארך אפין (*Erekh Appin*), Long-suffering, Vast Countenance. What is meant by *Erekh Appin*? Healing Countenance. For there is no healing in the world except when they gaze face-to-face.[136]

“In the hollow of the skull shine three lights. If you say ‘three,’ there are four, as I have said: the inheritance of His Father and Mother, and their two treasures. All of these adorn His head, and they are tefillin of the head. Afterward they join at His sides, shining, and enter the three cavities of the skull; and each one emerges in its direction, spreading throughout the body.[137]

“These join with two brains, and the third brain includes them, adhering to this side and that side—spreading throughout the body, turning into two colors blended as one. His face shines, the colors of His face testifying to Father and Mother.[138]

“He is called *Da’at* in *Da’at*, and it is written *For* אל דעות (*El de’ot*), *a God of knowledges, is* *YHVH*, ולו נתכנו עלילות (*ve-lo nitkenu alilot*), *and by Him actions are determined* (1 Samuel 2:3)—because He has two colors, *by Him actions are determined*. However, for the Holy Ancient Concealed One, לא נתכנו (*lo nitkenu*), *they have no place*. Why *nitkenu, are they determined*, by the former? Because He inherits two shares; and it is written עם חסיד תתחסד (*Im ḥasid titḥassad*), *With the kind, You deal kindly*; [עם גבור תמים (*im gibbor tamim*), *with the blameless hero, blamelessly*] (2 Samuel 22:26).[139]

“Truly have the Companions established what is written: ויגד יעקב (*Va-yagged ya’aqov*), *Jacob told*, [293a] *Rachel* (Genesis 29:12). *Va-yagged, He told*—we have already established this: *Va-yagged, He told, you His covenant*

(Deuteronomy 4:13); הגדתי (*Higgadti*), *I have told, today to YHVH your God* (ibid. 26:3); *Ask your father*, ויגדך (*ve-yaggedekha*), *and he will tell you* (ibid. 32:7); *Gather round*, ואגידה (*ve-aggidah*), *that I may tell, you* (Genesis 49:1). All of these allude to wisdom; so אמירה (*amirah*), saying, is not written. Here, too, *Va-yagged ya'aqov, Jacob told, Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son* (ibid. 29:12). *Rebekah's son*—it is not written *Isaac's son*, all alluding to wisdom. Consequently, he is totally complete, and faith is manifested in him; so it is written *va-yagged ya'aqov, Jacob told*—not ויאמר (*va-yomer*), *he said*.[140]

"These colors spread throughout the body, which is imbued with them. For the Holy Concealed Ancient One, לא נתכנו (*lo nitkenu*), *they have no place*, and are not suitable for Him; for all exists as one—life for all—Judgment does not pertain to Him. But for this one, לו נתכנו עלילות (*lo nitkenu alilot*), *by Him actions are determined*, surely![141]

"From the skull of the head hang all those myriads and thousands of locks of hair, which are black. They are interwoven and intertwined; for they are twined with the supernal radiance adorning His head from Father and from the brain illumined by Father. Afterward emerge strands upon strands from the radiance adorning His head from Mother and from the other brains. Since they intermingle and interweave, all of them intertwine and interweave with the hairs stemming from Father.[142]

"All those brains are linked to the Supernal Brain. And all those flows emanating from the three cavities of the brain intermingle—with purity and impurity, with all those reasons and mysteries, concealed and revealed. Therefore, all those brains are alluded to by *I am YHVH your God*… (Exodus 20:2), just as they shine in the crown of the head and enter the cavities of the skull.[143]

"All those locks cover and hang over the sides of the ears. As we have already established, because of this it is

written *Incline Your ear, O YHVH, and hear* (2 Kings 19:16). From this we have established that whoever wants the King to incline His ears toward him should curl the hair of the King's head, removing the hair from over His ears. Then the King will listen to whatever he desires.[144]

"In the part of the hair, one path is connected to the path of the Ancient of Days, and from it branch out all the paths of the commandments of Torah. Appointed over them are all the masters of wailing and howling, dangling from every single lock; and they spread a net for the wicked, who do not know those paths—as is written: *The way of the wicked is like darkness: they know not on what they stumble* (Proverbs 4:19). All of these hang from coarse locks, so all of them are coarse.[145]

"And to the smooth ones, as we have established, adhere the masters of balance, as is written: *All the paths of YHVH are kindness and truth, for the keepers of His covenant and His precepts* (Psalms 25:10). All this because they are drawn from concealed brains of channels of the brain, so each one occupies its own path.[146]

"From one brain, through those smooth locks, are conveyed the masters of balance—to whom are ascribed *kindness and truth*, as is written: *All the paths of YHVH are kindness and truth*. From the second brain, through those coarse locks, are conveyed and derived the masters of wailing and howling, of whom is written *The way of the wicked is like darkness: they know not on what they stumble*. What does this indicate? Well, *they know not*—that is, they neither know nor wish to know.[147]

"במה (*Ba-meh*), *On what, they stumble*—do not read במה (*ba-meh*), *on what*, but rather באימא (*be-imma*), *on Mother, they stumble*: on those linked to the side of Mother. Who is the side of Mother? Severe *Gevurah*, to whom are linked the masters of wailing and howling.[148]

“From the third brain, through those locks in the middle, are conveyed and derived masters of qualities, who are called ‘faces shining and yet not shining.’ Of these is written *Level the path of your foot…* (Proverbs 4:26). All is found in those locks of hair of the head.[149]

“The forehead of the skull—a forehead calling the wicked to account. When this forehead is revealed, masters of Judgment are aroused against those who are not ashamed of their misdeeds.[150]

“This forehead is red as a rose. When the forehead of the Ancient One is revealed to this forehead, it turns white as snow; and that time is called a time of favor for all.[151]

“In the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Sava it is said: ‘מצח (*Metsaḥ*), Forehead—if one is worthy, *metsaḥ*, the forehead of, the Ancient One; if not, ח (*ḥet*) is cast between two letters, as is said: ומחץ (*u-maḥats*), *and smashes, the brow of Moab* (Numbers 24:17).’[152]

“And we have established that with consecutive letters it is called נצח (*netsaḥ*), Victory. How many נצחים (*netsaḥim*) there are! Although another *Netsaḥ* attains another place, there are *netsaḥim* spreading throughout the body. And because on Sabbath, at the time of *minḥah*—in order that judgments not be aroused—the Holy Ancient One reveals His forehead, and all judgments are overpowered and subdued and not enacted.[153]

“From this forehead derive twenty-four courts of judgment, for all those who are impudent in their deeds, as is written: *They say, ‘How could God know?* [*Is there knowledge with the Most High?*]’ (Psalms 73:11).[154]

“But there are twenty! Why four more? [293b] Corresponding to the four types of capital punishment imposed by the court below, which derive from above. This leaves twenty. Therefore, the Court above does not punish until one has completed and attained twenty years, corresponding to the twenty courts. In our Concealed

Mishnah we have learned: ‘Corresponding to the twenty-four books contained in the Torah.’[155]

“The eyes of the head. Those are eyes that the wicked do not beware, eyes that sleep yet do not sleep. So of them is written *His eyes are like doves* (Song of Songs 5:12). What is meant by יונים (*yonim*), *doves*? As is said: לא תונו (*Lo tonu*), *You shall not deceive, one another* (Leviticus 25:17). Concerning this is written *They say, ‘Yah will not see, and the God of Jacob will not heed’* (Psalms 94:7). And it is written: *Who plants the ear, will He not hear? Who fashions the eye, will He not look?* (ibid., 9).[156]

“The enhancement above the eye—hairs measured proportionately. From those hairs are suspended 1,700 masters of watchfulness, ready to wage war. Then they all rise from their chains, and the eyes open.[157]

“As for the covering over the eyes, lashes adhere to it; and a thousand and myriads of shield-bearing warriors adhere to them, and they are called ‘covering of the eyes.’ All those called ‘eyes of *YHVH*’ never open or awaken except when these eyelid-coverings separate—lower from upper. When the eyelids separate, lower from upper—yielding a field of vision—the eyes open, and He appears as one awakening from his sleep. The eyes revolve, looking at the open eye, and are bathed in its whiteness. When they are bathed, masters of judgment against Israel are subdued. Therefore it is written: *Awake! Why do You sleep, O YHVH?* (Psalms 44:24).[158]

“Four colors appear in those eyes, from which shine four compartments of tefillin, illumining the channels of the brain.[159]

“Seven called ‘eyes of watchfulness’ emerge from the black color of the eye, as we have established, for it is written: *Upon one stone, seven eyes* (Zechariah 3:9). Those colors flash on its sides.[160]

“From the red emerge others, masters of watchfulness for Judgment. They are called *the eyes of* YHVH משוטטות (*meshotetot*), *ranging* (2 Chronicles 16:9)—*meshotetot*, not משוטטים (*meshotetim*), since all of them are Judgment.[161]

“From the green emerge others, poised to expose actions, whether good or evil, as is written: *For His eyes are upon a person’s ways*… (Job 34:21). These are called *the eyes of* YHVH משוטטים (*meshotetim*), *ranging* (Zechariah 4:10)—*meshotetim*, not משוטטות (*meshotetot*), since they face in two directions: toward good and toward evil.[162]

“From the white emerge all those mercies—all the goodness found in the world, benefiting Israel.

“Then all these three colors are bathed, to have compassion upon them.[163]

“These colors intermingle, merging with one another—each one lending some of its color to its fellow—except for white, in which all are absorbed when necessary, and which covers all. As for all colors below, inhabitants of the world cannot turn them—black, red, or green—into white. Yet here, with one gaze, all of them are transformed, bathed in white.[164]

“His eyelids do not subside when colors need to gaze, because the eyelids yield a field of vision for all those colors. Unless they provide a field, [the colors] cannot gaze and see. For one whole hour, the eyelids do not stand still or settle down, but rather open and close, close and open—on account of the open eye poised above them. Of this is written *the living beings darting back and forth* (Ezekiel 1:14).[165]

“We have already established: *Your eyes will see Jerusalem* (Isaiah 33:20); and it is written *The eyes of* YHVH *your God are perpetually upon her from the beginning of the year to the end of the year* (Deuteronomy 11:12). For Jerusalem needs this, since it is written צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness, lodged in her* (Isaiah 1:21). Therefore, *Jerusalem*, and not *Zion*, for it is written *Zion will be*

redeemed במשפט (*be-mishpat*), *by justice*… (ibid., 27)—entirely Compassion.[166]

"עיניך (*Einekha*), *Your eyes*—spelled עינך (*einekha*), *your eye*, that of the concealed Holy Ancient One. Now, *the eyes of YHVH your God*, for good and for evil, fittingly; but then, *Your eye will see Jerusalem*—entirely for good, entirely in Compassion, as is written: *With great compassion will I gather you* (Isaiah 54:7).[167]

"*The eyes of YHVH your God are perpetually upon her* מרשית (*me-reshit*), *from the beginning of*, [*the year to the end of the year*]—spelled without an א (*alef*), and not ראשית (*reshit*), with an א (*alef*). Therefore, she does not endure abidingly, constantly. Who is she? This one below. And concerning above, it is written *He has cast down earth from heaven* (Lamentations 2:1). Why has *He cast down earth from heaven*? Because it is written *I clothe* [294a] *the heavens in darkness* (Isaiah 50:3)—the eyes are covered with darkness, with the color black.[168]

"מרשית (*Me-reshit*), *From the beginning of, the year*. From what place do these *eyes of YHVH* gaze upon Jerusalem? The verse goes on to explain: מרשית (*me-reshit*), *from the beginning of, the year*—which is Judgment, without א (*alef*). Judgment is joined to Her side, although She Herself is not actually Judgment.[169]

"*To the end of the year*—at *the end of the year*, surely, Judgment is found; for it is written: צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness, lodged in her* (Isaiah 1:21), which is *the end of the year*.[170]

"Come and see: א (*Alef*) on its own is called ראשון (*rishon*), first, male. In *alef* is concealed and hidden what is not known. When this *alef* is joined to another place, it is called ראשית (*reshit*), beginning. If you say that it is joined—no; rather, it is revealed in it, illumining it. Then it is called *reshit*, beginning. Yet even with this ראשית (*reshit*), beginning, He does not gaze upon Jerusalem; for were it so, she would endure perpetually. Rather, it is written מרשית (*me-reshit*),

from the beginning. And of the world that is coming, it is written ראשון (*Rishon*), *The first*, [*shall say*] *to Zion, 'Behold, here they are!' And to Jerusalem I will send a herald* (Isaiah 41:27).[171]

"The nose of *Ze'eir Anpin*—enhancement of the countenance; the whole face is thereby recognized. This nose is unlike the nose of the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed; for the nose of the Ancient One is life of life for all—from its two nostrils, breath of life for all and life for all. Of this *Ze'eir Anpin* is written *Smoke rose from His nostrils, consuming fire from His mouth* (2 Samuel 22:9).[172]

"In this smoke intermingle all colors; to every single color adhere many masters of harsh Judgment, mingling in that smoke. Therefore none of them are assuaged except by the smoke of the altar below. Of this is written *YHVH smelled* ריח הניחח (*reiaḥ ha-niḥoaḥ*), *the soothing aroma* (Genesis 8:21). What is meant by *ha-niḥoaḥ, the soothing*? Assuaging of the masters of Judgment—נחת רוח (*naḥat ruaḥ*), tranquility of spirit. It is not written *YHVH smelled the aroma of the sacrifice*, but rather *the soothing aroma*; for all those powers linked to the nose, and all those linked to them, are assuaged. Countless powers join as one, as is written: *Who can declare the powers of YHVH?* (Psalms 106:2).[173]

"From both nostrils of this nose issues fire consuming all other fires—from one nostril, smoke; from the other nostril, fire. Both this and that are subdued on the altar by smoke and fire. This Holy Ancient One is revealed, and all is assuaged—corresponding to what is said: *For My praise*, אחטם (*eḥetom*), *I restrain the nose, for you…* (Isaiah 48:9).[174]

"The nose of the Holy Ancient One is אריך (*arikh*), long, and extended, so He is called ארך אפים (*erekh appayim*), Long-nosed, Long-suffering. This nose, however, is זעיר (*ze'eir*), short; and when smoke begins, it comes out hurriedly and Judgment is executed. Who prevents this? The nose of the

Ancient One. All as I have said in the *Idra*, and the Companions were aroused.[175]

"In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava, he established these two nostrils as follows: 'From one, smoke and fire; from the other, tranquility and beneficent breath—for it includes right and left. For it is written *his aroma like Lebanon* (Hosea 14:7), and of the Female is written *the aroma of your nose like apples* (Song of Songs 7:9). Now, if this is true of the Female, all the more so of Him!' He has spoken well.[176]

"Regarding what I said: *YHVH smelled* ריח הניחח (*reiaḥ ha-niḥoaḥ*), *the soothing aroma*—in two aspects. One: נייחא (*neyaḥa*), satisfaction, that the Holy Ancient One, concealed of all concealed, has been revealed; for this is satisfaction and assuagement of all. And the other: assuagement below, by that smoke and fire of the altar. Since this involves two aspects, it is written הניחח (*ha-niḥoaḥ*). And all pertains to *Ze'eir Anpin*.[177]

"Two ears—to hear good and evil. Both of them are considered one, as is written: *Incline Your ear, O YHVH, and hear* (2 Kings 19:16). The ear within, within, is entirely of winding design, so that the sound will be delayed in entering the brain, and the brain will discern it without haste. For anything done hastily is not in perfect wisdom.[178]

"From these ears dangle all the winged beings, who carry sound from the world; and all of them are thus called 'ears of *YHVH*,' of whom is written *For a bird of heaven will carry the sound, and a winged being will tell the word* (Ecclesiastes 10:20). *For a bird of heaven will carry the sound*—this verse is difficult: what sound is there here? For the beginning of the verse reads *Even in your mind revile not a king*—it is written *in your mind*!—*and in your sleeping chambers revile not a rich man*. Why? *For a bird of heaven will carry the sound*. Yet there is no sound![179]

“But surely, whatever a person thinks and whatever he imagines in his heart has no effect until he expresses it with his lips, even unintentionally. The word that he utters pierces the atmosphere—[294b] rising high, flying through the world, and becoming a voice. The winged beings grasp that voice and raise it to the King, and it enters His ears, as is written: *YHVH heard the voice of your words* (Deuteronomy 5:25); *YHVH heard and His nose flared* (Numbers 11:1).[180]

“Therefore every prayer and every request that a person presents before the blessed Holy One must be expressed as words on his lips; for if he does not bring them forth, his prayer is no prayer and his request is no request. As soon as words issue, they pierce the atmosphere—ascending, flying, and becoming a voice. They are grasped by the one who grasps, and he fastens them to the holy Crown on the head of the King.[181]

“From the three cavities [of the brain] drips a trickle to the ears, which is called a stream—as is said: *the stream of* כרית (*kerit*), *Cherith* (1 Kings 17:3), that is, כרותא (*keruta*), a channel, of the ears. The voice enters that winding spiral and is absorbed in that trickling river; then it is delayed there and tested to determine whether it is good or evil, as is written: *For the ear tests words, and the palate tastes in eating* (Job 34:3). Why does *the ear test words*? Because the voice is delayed in that trickling river, in the winding spiral of the ears, and does not enter hurriedly. Thereby it is discerned as either good or evil.[182]

“*And the palate tastes in eating*. Why *the palate*? Because [the food] is delayed there, not entering hurriedly into the body; so [*the palate*] *tastes*, distinguishing between sweet and bitter.

“Upon this cavity of the ears depend other cavities: the cavity of the eyes, the cavity of the mouth, the cavity of the nose. Some of that voice entering the cavity of the ears—if necessary—enters the cavities of the eyes, and tears flow

from that voice. If necessary, it enters the cavities of the armoire, which emit smoke and fire from that voice, as is written: *YHVH heard and His nose flared, and the fire of YHVH blazed against them* (Numbers 11:1). If necessary, that voice enters the cavity of the mouth; and it speaks, articulating words. From that voice, all. Some of that voice enters the whole body, and it trembles.[183]

"How much depends upon this ear! Happy is one who watches his words! Of this is written *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit* (Psalms 34:14).[184]

"To this ear is attributed שמיעה (*shemi'ah*), hearing, and in hearing are included those brains. *Ḥokhmah* is included in it, as is written: *May You give Your servant* לב שומע (*lev shome'a*), *a hearing heart* (1 Kings 3:9). *Binah*, as is said: *Speak, for Your servant* שומע (*shome'a*), *is listening* (1 Samuel 3:10); *for we* שומעים (*shome'im*), *hear* (2 Kings 18:26). All depends upon these. *Da'at*—as is said: שמע (*Shema*), *Hear, my son, and take in my sayings*… (Proverbs 4:10). Thus all depends upon the ears.[185]

"Upon this ear depend prayers and requests and opening of the eyes, as is written: *Incline Your ear, O my God, and hear; open Your eyes and see* (2 Kings 19:16). Thus all depends upon it.[186]

"In this ear are suspended supernal mysteries that do not emerge outside. Therefore it winds within, concealing the most secret of secrets. Woe to one who reveals secrets! Since this ear gathers in secrets, and the winding within absorbs them, it does not reveal secrets to those whose paths are crooked, but only to those who paths are not—as is written: *The secret of YHVH is for those who revere Him* (Psalms 25:14), who uphold His ways and guard words.[187]

"Those who are crooked in their ways obtain words and draw them in hurriedly, leaving them no place to linger. All the other cavities are opened within such a person, so words emerge from the cavity of the mouth. These are

called the wicked of the generation, hated by the blessed Holy One. In our Mishnah we have learned: ‘It is as if he killed people and as if he worshiped idols. All is included in one verse, as is written: *You shall not go about as a slanderer among your kin. You shall not stand over the blood of your fellow. I am* YHVH (Leviticus 19:16). Whoever transgresses the beginning of the verse is as if he transgressed the whole.’[188]

“Happy is the share of the righteous! Of them is written *The faithful of spirit conceals a word* (Proverbs 11:13). *The faithful of spirit*, surely! For their spirit is unsheathed from a holy place, so they are called *faithful of spirit*. We have established this sign: If anyone reveals secrets, his soul is obviously not from the body of the Holy King. Consequently, he contains no secret, and does not derive from the secret realm. When his soul departs, it does not cleave to the body of the King, for that is not its place. Woe to that person! Woe to him, woe to his soul! Happy is the share of the righteous, who conceal secrets—especially supernal secrets of the blessed Holy One, supernal mysteries of the Holy King! Of them is written *The righteous will inherit the land* (Psalms 37:29).[189] [295a]

“His face, like two offerings of spices, all testifying to what I have said; for testimony depends upon them. Upon all depends testimony, but these offerings of spices—white and red—are testimony to Father and Mother, testimony to the inheritance that He receives and holds.[190]

“In our Mishnah we have established how many parasangs separate white from red; yet they blend in Him as one on the white side. When He is illumined by the white radiance of the Ancient One, that white overlays the red, and all becomes radiant. But when judgments loom over the world and the wicked increase, leprosy pervades all—and red spreads over the face, covering all the white. Then all is imbued with Judgment; and then, garments of zeal—it is

written: *garments of vengeance* (Isaiah 59:17). All depends upon this.[191]

"Thus it testifies to all things. Countless shield-bearing warriors await these colors, looking out for these colors. When colors shine, all worlds are in joy—when white shines, all turns into that color. But when it appears red, all turns into that color.[192]

"In these offerings of spices, the beard begins to appear—from the top of the ears, descending and ascending in the offering of spices. Black hair of the beard, beautifully arranged, like a mighty man.[193]

"Anointing oil of the supernal beard of the Ancient One enters this beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*. The beauty of this beard is manifested in nine enhancements; and when the holy anointing oil of the beard of the Ancient One shines in this beard, there are twenty-two enhancements. Then they all are blessed; and Israel, unspecified, is thereby blessed. The mnemonic is: בך (*Bekha*), *By you, shall Israel bless* (Genesis 48:20).[194]

"The enhancements of the beard we have established in the *Idra*; here I wish to enter without shame. Regarding all the enhancements of the beard, we have established that they all derive from the enhancements of the beard of the Ancient One. And we have established in the Holy *Idra*: Six there are; nine they are called. As for the first enhancement, that spark from the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness radiated—striking beneath the hair of the head, beneath the locks overhanging the ears, and descending in front of the opening of the ears to the top of the mouth.[195]

"This enhancement originates in the Holy Ancient One only when the ancient holy *mazzala* streams, from which derives that spring of Wisdom. When Mother flows, absorbing pure air, She obtains that white. The spark enters and emerges—one uniting with the other—and one enhancement is formed.[196]

“When necessary, one rises above the other, one covered by another. So all is needed: one to take vengeance, the other to show mercy. Because of this, King David desired this beard, as we have established.[197]

“In this beard appear nine enhancements—with sixty thousand hanging from them, spreading throughout the body. Six of these hang from the hair beneath the offering of spices: three on one side and three on the other. And from the precious splendor of the beard hang three others: one above the lips and two in that hair hanging down to the navel.[198]

“All these six—three on this side and three on that side—flow and hang in those hairs hanging and spreading throughout the body. And because these three are more prominent in the splendor of the beard than all the rest, the Holy Name is applied to them, as is written: *From confinement I called to Yah. Yah answered me with expanse. YHVH is with me, I do not fear* (Psalms 118:5–6). As for what we have established in the *Idra*: ‘*From confinement I called to Yah*, from the place where the beard begins to spread, which is a constricted place in front of the ears’—that is fine.[199]

“And in the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava, he said and established that the beard begins from supernal *Ḥesed*, as is written: *Yours, O YHVH, are* הגדולה (*ha-gedullah*), *the greatness* [*and the power and the beauty*]… (1 Chronicles 29:11). It is all, and thus it begins. Nine flow, suspended in the beard, beginning thus in front of the ears. Yet they do not endure vitally except in another place, as I have said.[200]

“When the world needs Compassion, the ancient *mazzala* is revealed, and all these enhancements in the glorious beard of *Ze’eir Anpin* become compassionate—wreaking vengeance upon the enemies of Israel, upon those who afflict them. [295b] All the glory of the beard consists in those hairs hanging down, for all depends on this.[201]

“All these hairs of the beard of *Ze’eir Anpin* are coarse and rough, since all of them subdue judgments when the holy *mazzala* is revealed. When He wants to wage war, He appears like a mighty hero, victorious in battle. Then the one who plucks, plucks; and the one who balds, balds.[202]

“These nine enhancements were recited by Moses a second time when it was essential to convert them all to Compassion. Even though he did not now recite the thirteen enhancements, the matter depended upon intention; for before beginning to mention these [nine] enhancements, he concentrated on *mazzala*, mentioning it, as is written: *Now, please, let the power of YHVH be great* (Numbers 14:17)—the one who is called Holy *Mazzala*, concealed of all concealed. For this power and this radiance derive from *mazzala*. Once Moses said this and mentioned this, concentrating on it, he enumerated the nine enhancements suspended in *Ze’eir Anpin*, so that they would all shine and Judgment would disappear. Thus all depends upon *mazzala*.[203]

“When the hairs of this beard begin to be aroused, He is aroused like a mighty hero, like a warrior victorious in battle. In this beard flows anointing oil from the concealed Ancient One, as is said: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard*… (Psalms 133:2).[204]

“These hairs do not cover the lips, and the lips are entirely red as a rose, as is written: *His lips are roses* (Song of Songs 5:13)—lips murmuring *Gevurah*, Power, murmuring *Ḥokhmeta*, Wisdom. Upon those lips depend good and evil, life and death. From those lips are suspended masters of אתערותא (*it’aruta*), arousal; when these lips murmur, they all מתערין (*mit’arin*), are aroused, to decree judgment in all the courts in which they dwell. So they are called עירין (*irin*), watchers, as is written: *By decree of irin, the watchers, is the sentence*… (Daniel 4:14). What is meant by עיר (*ir*)? As is said: *He has become* ערך (*arekha*), *your foe* (1 Samuel 28:16);

for מתערין (*mit'arin*), they arouse, Judgment against those who are not beloved above. So these are aroused, becoming their archenemies. Nevertheless, in two aspects: in Compassion and in Judgment. So they are called עיר וקדיש (*ir ve-qaddish*), *a watcher and a holy one* (Daniel 4:10)—Judgment and Compassion.[205]

"Between these lips, the mouth is seen when it opens. In the breath issuing from the mouth are clothed many thousands and myriads. As it spreads, faithful prophets are clothed by it, and all of them are called Mouth of *YHVH*.[206]

"When words issue from the mouth—uttered by the lips—they stimulate and illumine all eighteen thousand worlds, until these are all linked together as one, in twelve known ways and paths. They all מחכא (*meḥakka*), await, one another—with a tongue speaking grandly—in a dazzling cluster, in a diadem. Of this is written חכו (*Ḥikko*), *His palate, is sweets* (Song of Songs 5:16)—*sweets*, surely! What is meant by *his palate*? As is said: *The palate tastes in eating* (Job 34:3). *And all of him* מחמדים (*maḥamaddim*), *desirable* (Song of Songs, ibid.)—fire and water. Fire and water beautifully arranged on His sides, for colors join as one.[207]

"*His palate*—with inscribed letters engraved in His crowns, congealing. א (*Alef*)—driving out kings; *removing kings and establishing kings* (Daniel 2:21).[208]

"ח (*Ḥet*)—driving out and casting down, raising up and crowning; conquering with fire, congealing with wind.[209]

"ה (*He*)—Mother suckling, turning toward the Female, extending to the Great Female in yearning for the Holy City. For the places interlink, as is said: *the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense* (Song of Songs 4:6).[210]

"ע (*Ayin*)—radiance of a glowing ember engraved on the lip, rafters of branches adjoined to His sides, to engraved spirits.[211]

"Behold, in the Mysteries of Letters of King Solomon: 'These four letters are crowned with four—ג (*gimel*), י (*yod*), כ (*kaf*), ק (*qof*). *Can tasteless food be eaten unsalted? Is there*

flavor in the juice of mallows? (Job 6:6). And it is written: *The work of* הצדקה (*ha-tsedaqah*), *righteousness, will be peace* (Isaiah 32:17); *More desirable than gold, than abundant pure gold; sweeter than honey and drippings of the comb* (Psalms 19:11)—*sweeter*, surely! King David said, *Your servant, too, is careful with them. In keeping them—great reward* (ibid., 12).'[212]

"I testify that all my days I have been careful with them, not to err—except one day when I was crowning the King with His crowns in the cave of Meron, and I saw a fiery torch blazing across the breadth of Meron, and I trembled. Ever since that day, I have been vigilant in my mind about them, never neglecting them. Happy is the share of one who is careful with the sweets of the King, tasting them fittingly! Of this is written *Taste and see that YHVH is good; happy the man who shelters in Him* (Psalms 34:9). And it is written: *Come, eat of my bread! Drink of the wine I have mingled!* (Proverbs 9:5).[213]

"The Male extends by *Da'at*, and porticos and chambers are filled. From the top of the skull, it begins spreading throughout the body, from His breast and His arms through all.[214]

"To His back cleaves a spark from the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness—flashing, generating [296a] a certain skull, sealed on all sides, with the radiance of two brains engraved in it. She cleaves to the side of the Male, so She is called *my dove, my perfect one* (Song of Songs 5:2). Do not read תמתי (*tammati*), *my perfect one*, but rather תאומתי (*te'omati*), *my twin*, surely![215]

"In the hair of the Female, colors are mingled, as is written: *the dangling locks of your head like royal purple* (Song of Songs 7:6).[216]

"*Gevurah* is linked with five *Gevuran*, Powers; and the Female expands in Her directions, cleaving to the side of the Male—until She is separated from His side and comes to

join with Him face-to-face. When they join, they appear as really one body.[217]

"From here we learn: A male alone appears as half a body—entirely Compassion, though split—and similarly a female. When they join as one, all appears as one body, really; so it is. Here, too, when the Male joins with the Female, all is one body; and all worlds are joyful, for they are blessed by a complete body.[218]

"This corresponds to the mystery: *Therefore YHVH blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it* (Exodus 20:11); for all constituted one complete body—*Matronita* cleaving to the King, becoming a single body. Therefore blessings prevail on this day.[219]

"From here we learn that one who is not male and female is called 'half a body.' No blessing inheres in anything lacking or defective, but only in a complete place, a complete thing—not half a thing. Half a thing can never endure and never be blessed.[220]

"The beauty of the Female derives entirely from the beauty of the Male. We have already established these matters, and they are known among the Companions.

"To this Female are linked all those below. From Her they suckle, and to Her they return, and She is called their Mother. Just as another one is mother to the body, and the whole body suckles from Her, so is this one to all those others below.[221]

"It is written: *Say to Wisdom, 'You are my sister'* (Proverbs 7:4). There is *Wisdom*, and then there is *Wisdom*. This Female Wisdom is called 'Small' in comparison with the other. So She is called *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts* (Song of Songs 8:8)—for this one has been dragged into exile. *We have a little sister*—although She certainly seems *little*, She is grand and great, for She is fullness, receiving from all, as is written: *I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers* (ibid., 10). *And my breasts*—for they are full

to suckle all. כמגדלות (*Ka-migdalot*), *Like towers*—for they are great rivers issuing from Supernal Mother.[222]

"The Male extends on the right and the left, through the inheritance that He receives. When colors combine, He is called *Tif'eret*, Beauty; and the entire body is arrayed as a great and mighty Tree, beautiful and fine. *Beneath it the beasts of the field find shade, and in its branches dwell the birds of heaven, and there is food for all in it* (Daniel 4:9).[223]

"His arms, right and left. In the right, life and *Ḥesed*; in the left, death and *Gevurah*. His innards are configured with *Da'at*, and all porticos and chambers are filled, as I have said, for it is written: ובדעת (*Uv-da'at*), *And by knowledge, rooms are filled* (Proverbs 24:4).[224]

"Further the body extends into two thighs; and joined between them are two kidneys and two testicles of the Male—in which are gathered all the anointing oil and vigor of the Male, of the whole body. All the powers issuing, issue from them, all pouring forth in the mouth of the phallus. Therefore they are called *Tseva'ot*, Forces, namely *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. *Tif'eret*—*YHVH*. *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*—*Tseva'ot*. Thus, *YHVH Tseva'ot*.[225]

"Phallus of the Male—consummation of the whole body, called *Yesod*. That is the very rung that sweetens the Female. All the desire of the Male toward the Female inheres in this *Yesod*—entering the Female, to the place called Zion and Jerusalem, which is the place of covering of the Female, like a woman's vagina. Therefore it is written: *For YHVH has chosen Zion, He desired her as His seat* (Psalms 132:13). When *Matronita* is separated, and conjoins with the King face-to-face on Sabbath eve, all becomes one body. Then the blessed Holy One sits upon His Throne, and all is called the Complete Name, the Holy Name. May His Name be blessed forever and ever![226]

"All these words I have reserved for this day, so that I might be adorned with them in the world that is coming. Yet

now they are revealed here. Happy is my share![227]

"When this *Matronita* conjoins with the King, all worlds are blessed and in a state of total joy. [296b] Just as the Male is composed of three, and the beginning is of three, so is all, and so is consummation of the whole body. *Matronita* is blessed only by totality of these three—namely *Netsaḥ*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. And She is sweetened and blessed in the site of the Holy of Holies below, as is written: *For there YHVH ordained the blessing, life forevermore* (Psalms 133:3), since there are two rungs, above and below.[228]

"Therefore no one is permitted to enter there except the high priest, who derives from the side of *Ḥesed*, since no one enters that place above except the one called *Ḥesed*, entering the Holy of Holies—and the Female is sweetened, and this Holy of Holies is blessed deep within, in the place called Zion.[229]

"Zion and Jerusalem are two rungs—one Compassion and the other Judgment. Zion, as is written: *Zion will be redeemed* במשפט (*be-mishpat*), *by justice* (Isaiah 1:27). Jerusalem, as is written: צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness, lodged in her* (ibid., 21), as we have established.[230]

"However, the desire of the Male toward the Female is called so; and from here issue blessings to all worlds, and they are all blessed. This place is called Holy, and all Holies of the Male enter there, in that rung that I have mentioned. They all come from the supernal head of the skull of the Male, from the aspect of supernal brains residing therein. That blessing flows through all members of the body to those called *Tseva'ot*, and that entire flow conveyed from the whole body gathers there—which is why they are called *Tseva'ot*, since all *tseva'ot*, forces, of those above and below issue from there. After that flow gathers there, it is poured forth into that holy *Yesod*—completely white—which is why it is called *Ḥesed*. Some of that *Ḥesed* enters the Holy of Holies, as is written: *For there YHVH ordained the blessing, life forevermore*."[231]

Rabbi Abba said, “The Supernal Holy Lamp had not finished saying *life*, before his words subsided. I was writing, intending to write more, yet I heard nothing. I did not raise my head, for the light was too great and I could not look. Just then, I trembled. I heard a voice saying, *Length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you* (Proverbs 3:2). I heard another voice: *Life he asked of You—You gave it to him, length of days forever and ever* (Psalms 21:5).[232]

“All that day, fire did not cease from the house. No one reached him—no one could, since light and fire surrounded him all day long. I flung myself on the ground and wailed.

“After the fire disappeared, I saw that the Supernal Lamp, Holy of Holies, had departed from the world—enwrapped, lying on his right, his face smiling.[233]

“Rabbi El’azar, his son, rose, took his hands, and kissed them. As for me, I licked the dust beneath his feet. The Companions wanted to weep, but they could not utter a sound. Then their weeping began. Rabbi El’azar, his son, flung himself down three times but could not open his mouth.

“Finally he opened, saying, ‘Father, Father! Three there were; into one they have turned. Now the beasts will flee; birds are flying away, sinking into the chasm of the Great Sea; and the Companions are all drinking blood.’”[234]

Rabbi Ḥiyya rose to his feet, and said, “Until now the Holy Lamp has been watching over us; now is solely the time to attend to his honor.”

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba rose. They carried him on a litter made of a ladder—Who has seen the confusion of the Companions?—and the whole house exuded fragrance. They lifted him onto a bier; only Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba attended to him.[235]

Truculent stingers and shield-bearing warriors came from Sepphoris and Tiberias; and the inhabitants of Meron, banding together, shouted—for they feared that he would not be buried there.[236]

After his bier emerged, it rose in the air, fire flaring before it. They heard a voice: “Come and enter! Gather for the wedding celebration of Rabbi Shim’on. *He shall enter into peace; they shall rest upon their couches* (Isaiah 57:2).”[237]

As he entered the cave, they heard a voice inside: “This is the man who shook the earth, who made kingdoms tremble. How many open mouths of accusation in heaven subside today because of you! This is Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, in whom his Lord glories every day. Happy is his share above and below! How many supernal treasures are preserved for him! Of him is said *As for you, go on till the end, and you will rest, and arise for your destiny at the end of days* (Daniel 12:13).”[238]

COMMENTARY ON HA'AZINU (continued)

Rabbi Yose said, "How beloved are Israel to the blessed Holy One! At first, He called them 'a holy nation,' as is written: *For you are a holy people* [*to YHVH your God*] (Deuteronomy 7:6). Later, He called them *holiness*, as is written: *Holiness is Israel to YHVH* (Jeremiah 2:3). [297a] What is the difference between one and the other?"[1]

Rabbi Abba said, "*Holiness* is highest of all, for we have learned as follows: When all sanctities join as one, they are called *holiness*; and all ascend, gathering to that supernal place called *holiness*.[2]

"Therefore, 'Holy, holy, holy' turn into *holiness*. And since the people of Israel are adorned with three rungs, when they join as one they are called *holiness to YHVH*, which is *first* (Jeremiah 2:3). And as we have established, תבואתה (*tevu'atoh*), *His harvest* (ibid.), with a ה (*he*)."[3]

All who devour him will be held guilty (ibid.). What is meant by *will be held guilty*?

Rabbi Abba said, "This has already been said: *If a man eats of holiness inadvertently*, and it is written: *No outsider shall eat of holiness* (Leviticus 22:14, 10). Since Israel is called *holiness*, it is written *All who devour him will be held guilty*."[4]

Rabbi El'azar said, "Beginning and end of all are comprised in *holiness*, and supernal Wisdom is called *holiness*; and when this Wisdom of Solomon shines—as we have learned: *The wisdom of Solomon increased* (1 Kings 5:10), for the moon waxed full, as has already been

established. When She is blessed by *Yesod*, we call Her *holiness*, for She shines in fullness. But when She is not illumined or adorned completely, we call Her רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), Spirit of Holiness—and not *holiness*, like the one above.[5]

"When She is blessed by this *Yesod* and suckles all those below, She is called Mother, like the one above. And we call Her Holies, and then Holy of Holies of the Bride's home, as is written: *With me from Lebanon, bride…* (Song of Songs 4:8). What is לבנון (*levanon*), *Lebanon*? Eden, דאתלבן (*de-itlabban*), which is whitened, in every direction. Eden is already known to the Companions."[6]

It has been taught: *For the name of YHVH do I call* (Deuteronomy 32:3). What is meant by *the name of YHVH*?[7]

Rabbi Shim'on said, "That which is written: *Hail greatness* לאלהינו (*le-loheinu*), *for our God* (ibid.)."[8]

Rabbi Abba said, "*Hail* גודל (*godel*), *greatness, le-loheinu, for our God—Gedullah. The Rock, His acts are perfect* (ibid., 4)—*Gevurah. For all His ways are* משפט (*mishpat*), *justice* (ibid.)—*Tif'eret. A steadfast* אל (*El*), *God* (ibid.)—*Netsaḥ. Without wrong* (ibid.)—*Hod. Righteous* (ibid.)—*Yesod. And upright* (ibid.)—*Tsedeq*, Righteousness. *Is He* (ibid.)—the entirety. *He*—the Holy Name, the name of the blessed Holy One. Thus, *For the name of YHVH do I call*."[9]

Rabbi Yose said, "*The name of YHVH*, really! On that very day, Moses revealed [wisdom] to Israel, as is written: *A hundred and twenty years old I am today* (Deuteronomy 31:2). From here we learn: When the time comes for a virtuous person who possesses supernal wisdom to depart from the world, he should reveal that wisdom to those among whom is the Holy Spirit. How do we know this? From Moses, for it is written: *A hundred and twenty years old I am today*. And it is written: *Now, write down this song and teach it to the Children of Israel* (ibid., 19). If not, of him is written *Do not withhold a benefit from those to whom it is due, when your hand has the power to act* (Proverbs

3:27)—before you depart from the world and are no longer empowered."[10]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "From this verse we have learned supernal wisdom, and it is so. However, the end of the verse binds the knot of faith with the word *He*, as is said: *righteous and upright is He*. This means: *He* is all, *He* is one without division. For if you say, 'All these are many,' the verse goes on to say *He*—all of them interlink and unite, amounting to one. *He* is all; *He* is and *He* will be. *He* is one. Blessed be His Name forever and ever! Until here, matters are linked; holy matters of the Name of the blessed Holy One are united.[11]

"Happy is the share of one who calls upon the King and knows how to call fittingly! But if he calls without knowing to whom he calls, the blessed Holy One moves afar from him. How do we know this? As it is written: *Near is YHVH to all who call Him*... (Psalms 145:18). *Near is YHVH to all who call Him*. To whom is He *near*? The verse goes on to say: *to all who call Him in truth*. Now, is there anyone who calls Him in falsehood?"[12]

Rabbi Abba said, "Yes—the one who calls without knowing to whom he calls. How do we know this? As is written: *to all who call Him in truth*. What is meant by *in truth*? The seal of the King's signet ring, which is perfection of all, as is said: *You will grant truth to Jacob* (Micah 7:20). Therefore it is written: *to all who call Him in truth*.[13]

"Happy is the share of one who enters and emerges, to know the ways of the blessed Holy One. Of this is written *The path of the righteous is like gleaming light, shining ever brighter until full day* (Proverbs 4:18); and it is written *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever*... (Isaiah 60:21)."[14]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "All these adornments and all these matters have been transmitted to the Reapers of the Field.[15]

“We have learned: The wicked, as it were, cause a defect above. What is meant by ‘a defect’? As is written: *Ruined Him—His non-children*, [297b] *their defect* (Deuteronomy 32:5). For all these adornments are improperly arranged.[16]

“One verset says, *He donned righteousness like a coat of armor* (Isaiah 59:17); and it is written *He clothed Himself in garments of vengeance* (ibid.). However—said Rabbi Yitsḥak—*He donned righteousness*, when the people of Israel were worthy. If they were not, *He clothed Himself in garments of vengeance*.”[17]

Rabbi Yose said, “What is the defect? As we have learned: The Patriarchs are not provided for, nor blessed from that saturating flow of the stream, and even less so the children—as is written: שחת לו לא בניו מומם (*Shiḥet lo lo banav mumam*), *Ruined Him—His non-children, their defect*. Why לא לו (*lo lo*), *Him, non-*, twice? Well, one above and one below.[18]

“This accords with what Rabbi Shim’on has said: Whenever the wicked proliferate in the world, the Holy Name, as it were, is not blessed in the world; and whenever the wicked do not proliferate in the world, the Holy Name is blessed in the world—as is written: *Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH, Hallelujah!* (Psalms 104:35).”[19]

Rabbi Abba said, “This verse itself says so! As is written: *Ruined Him—His non-children, their defect*. Who caused this ruin? *A perverse and twisted generation* (Deuteronomy 32:5)—because those wicked ones and the generation behave so.[20]

“Therefore, after Moses said all these words and mentioned the Holy Name fittingly, he said, ‘Surely, *righteous and upright is He* (ibid., 4)—the matter is perfectly arrayed. But, *Ruined Him—His non-children, their defect*. Why so? Because they are *a perverse and twisted generation*.”[21]

Rabbi Yehudah said, “לו לא (*lo lo*), *Him? No*—meaning: the wicked do this to themselves, causing blessings to vanish from the world.”[22]

Rabbi Abba said, “לו לא (*lo lo*), *Him, non-*. This has already been established, and so it is. What is written next? *Is this how you repay YHVH?* (Deuteronomy 32:6)—offering this recompense to Him for all those kindnesses that He brought about for you and performed before you?”[23]

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*Yet even this, too—when they are in the land of their enemies*, [*I will not reject them*]… (Leviticus 26:44). Happy are Israel above all other nations, for although they have provoked their Lord, the blessed Holy One does not want to abandon them! Wherever they have been exiled among the nations, the blessed Holy One is with them, as is written: *Yet even this, too—when they are in the land of their enemies*, [*I will not reject them*]….”[24]

Rabbi Abba said, “*Yet even* זאת (*zot*), *this, too*. Come and see how great is the love of the blessed Holy One for Israel! For even though they have caused themselves to be exiled among the nations, *Shekhinah* never departs from them. Do not say that they are in exile alone; for *yet even* זאת (*zot*), *this, too*, is present with them, as is written: *Yet even zot, this, too*….[25]

“This may be compared to a king who became angry at his son and decreed that as punishment he should go far away from him to a distant land. The *matronita* heard, and said, ‘Since my son is going to a distant land and the king has cast him out of his palace, I will not abandon him. Either we both return to the royal palace or we both dwell in another land.’

“After some time, the king sought the *matronita* and did not find her, since she had gone with her son. He said, ‘Since the *matronita* is there, let both of them return.’

“When the blessed Holy One seeks, He seeks *Matronita* first, and for Her sake He seeks His children—as is written:

I have also heard the groaning of the Children of Israel, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered My covenant (Exodus 6:5). 'Who caused Me to hear their groan of distress? *Matronita*, as it were, whom I remembered,' as is written: *and I have remembered My covenant*. And it is written: *YHVH remembered His covenant* (ibid. 2:24). And when the blessed Holy One brings Israel back from exile, what is written? *YHVH your God will return your captivity and have compassion on you* (Deuteronomy 30:3)—this is *Matronita*."[26]

Rabbi Yehudah said, "*Is* זאת (*zot*), *this, how you repay YHVH?* Because you are *a perverse and twisted generation*, you will cause *zot, this*, to go into exile. *Is zot, this, how you repay YHVH?* Is this the recompense for what He did for you—for all the miracles in Egypt, for all those wondrous signs that He performed for you? Is this the recompense you offer to *zot, this*? What caused you to do this? The fact that you are a *foolish and unwise people* (Deuteronomy 32:6), not perceiving all the kindness that He did for you until now."[27]

הליהוה (*Ha-le-YHVH*), *Is* [*this how you repay*] *YHVH*?—ה (*he*), *Shekhinta*. This matter has already been established, for we have learned: "The ה (*he*) of בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created* (Genesis 2:4), is small; the ה (*he*) of הליהוה (*Ha-le-YHVH*), *Is* [*this how you repay*] *YHVH*, is large." As has been said, it was taught in the name of Rabbi Yehudah: "ה (*He*) always signifies the blessed Holy One and is called Mother. There are two worlds, as is written: מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from world to world* (Psalms 106:48)." And we have learned in the mystery of Scripture: *with a fourth of* ההין (*ha-hin*), *a hin, of beaten oil* (Numbers 28:5).[28]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, "I have seen in various places that the blessed Holy One does not withdraw [298a] His love from Israel. For wherever they are, He is among them, as is written: *I will not reject them or loathe them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with*

them (Leviticus 26:44)—precisely: *with them*, among them and with them, never leaving them."[29]

Rabbi Yitsḥak was traveling on the way. He encountered Rabbi Ḥiyya, who said to him, "I see by your face that you abide in the abode of *Shekhinah*. What is written? ואֶרֶד (*Va-ered*), *I have come down, to rescue them from the hand of Egypt* (Exodus 3:8). *Va-ered, I have come down*—the verse should read אֵרֵד (*ered*), *I will come down*. However, *va-ered, I have come down*, previously. When was that? When Jacob went down to Egypt. Why? *To rescue them from the hand of Egypt*. For had He not been among them, they could not have endured the exile, as is said: *I am with him in distress. I will rescue him and honor him* (Psalms 91:15)."[30]

He said to him, "Surely wherever Israel dwells, the blessed Holy One is among them; and wherever the wise of the generation go, the blessed Holy One accompanies them—as is written: *For His angels He will command for you, to guard you on all your ways* (Psalms 91:11). How do we know this? As is written: *Jacob went on his way, and angels of God encountered him. When he saw them, Jacob said, 'This is a camp of Elohim!'* (Genesis 32:2–3). Now let us join as one, proceeding on the way; for I know we going to the same place, to welcome *Shekhinah*."[31]

He replied, "Certainly!"

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, "We have learned: 'Those who are sent to perform a *mitsvah* are not harmed, either when going or returning.' And we are going to appear in the presence of the blessed Holy One, so we are not afraid."[32]

As they went along, Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "It is written: *These are the generations of the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 2:4). *The heavens*—including the blessed Holy One. *And the earth*—including the blessed Holy One. Everything below is called their *generations*."[33]

He said to him, "If so, what is meant by בְּהִבָּרְאָם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created* (ibid.), since it is written

בה׳ בראם (*be-he bera'am*), By *he* He created them?"[34]

He replied, "All is one matter. When *the heavens* joined this ה (*he*), She brought forth *generations*, which are called *the generations of the heavens and the earth*."[35]

He said, "If so, how do we establish בהבראם' (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*—באברהם (*be-Avraham*), by Abraham'?"[36]

He replied, "It is all one matter. *Be-Avraham*, by Abraham—namely *the heavens*, since from there they begin to spread. *Be-he bera'am*, By *he* He created them—namely *and the earth*. All is one matter."[37]

He said, "Certainly so! I have learned that it is written *These are the generations of the heavens and the earth*, and we have learned that this world was created by ה (*he*)—as is written: בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created* (ibid.)—and the world that is coming was created by י (*yod*), as is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10), including *the heavens*; את הגן (*et ha-gan*), *the garden*, including *the earth*.[38]

"We have established that it is written *A spring of gardens* (Song of Songs 4:15)—*the heavens*.[39]

"*A well of living waters* (ibid.)—as is written: *Isaac's servants began digging a well there* (Genesis 26:25), and similarly: *He moved on from there and dug another well…* (ibid., 22).[40]

"*And streams from Lebanon* (Song of Songs, ibid.)—for they are adorned above, rising to the head of the King, as is written: *For Your love is higher than the heavens* (Psalms 108:5).[41]

"*From Lebanon*—from there they issue to all, flowing and channeled to all corners, until those springs flow and descend to gather in the place called the Great Sea, as is written: *All the streams flow into the sea…* (Ecclesiastes 1:7). And it is written: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug* (Isaiah 51:1).[42]

“Afterward is written *A locked garden, my sister bride; a locked fountain, a sealed spring* (Song of Songs 4:12). From here issue *generations* for all, as is written: בהבראם (*be-hibbare’am*), *when they were created*—בה׳ בראם (*be-he bera’am*), By *he* He created them; really באברהם (*be-Avraham*), by Abraham!”[43]

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Even really by Jacob! And all is one matter.”[44]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “When we sit before Rabbi Shim’on, all is said openly before him, and we do not need all this!”[45]

He replied, “Rabbi Shim’on is not like other human beings, for they are all to him as other prophets are to Moses.”[46]

As they went along, Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “It is written: *Can a woman forget her suckling, or feel no compassion for the child of her womb? Even she may forget, yet I will not forget you* (Isaiah 49:15). This verse has been established, but here what does it indicate?”[47]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “If in the cluster of Companions we have found no support on which to rely, what can we ourselves say?”[48]

He replied, “Well, look, I heard a hinting voice one day as I was going along the way—but I don’t know who said it, and I don’t know the substance. Come and see: For seven days I’ve felt sick over this and I haven’t tasted anything! Now I’m going to the Holy Lamp so that he can tell me—maybe I’ll remember.”[49]

[Rabbi Yitsḥak] said to him, “Maybe it was the same day that Rabbi El’azar was going to his father-in-law—and that day I went along with him, and I can remember the matter.[50]

“Come and see! Rabbi El’azar said as follows in the name of his father: Israel said before the blessed Holy One, ‘Ever since the day that we fell into exile, the blessed Holy One has forsaken us and forgotten us’—as is written: *Zion*

said, 'YHVH has forsaken me, YHVH has forgotten me' (Isaiah 49:14).[51]

"*Shekhinah* replied, '*Can a woman forget her suckling?*' Can Israel, who are called children—as is said: *You are children of YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:1)—[possibly be forgotten]? *'Or feel no compassion for the child of* [298b] *her womb?'*—as is said: *I planted you as a noble vine, of entirely faithful seed* (Jeremiah 2:21). *'Even these may be forgotten'*—as is written: *These are the generations of the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 2:4)—'*yet I will not forget you.*' From here we learn that the blessed Holy One never forsakes Israel.[52]

"[Rabbi El'azar] said further: *Can a woman forget her suckling, or feel no compassion for the child of her womb?* This is a supernal mystery spoken by the blessed Holy One, for these words are attached to His name. Just as the blessed Holy One does not forget His name, which is all, so He does not forget Israel, who are actually attached to His name."[53]

Rabbi Ḥiyya became excited, and said, "This is it, certainly! Blessed be the Holy One, that I encountered you and now know that matter, and know from whom I heard it.[54]

"Come and see: On that day I ran four miles but couldn't find who it was."

[Rabbi Yitsḥak] said, "Because we went into a certain cave, where Rabbi El'azar rested for an hour."

Rabbi Ḥiyya proclaimed over him these verses: *Then your light will burst through like the dawn and your healing quickly sprout.... Then you will call, and YHVH will answer; you will cry out, and He will say: "Here I am"* (Isaiah 58:8–9). *Then you will delight in YHVH, and I will cause you to ride upon the heights of the earth...* (ibid., 14).[55]

Remember ימות עולם (*yemot olam*), *the days of old*. Rabbi Abba said, "Who are *yemot olam*, *the days of the world*? They are

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations… (Deuteronomy 32:7).[56]

the six days by which the blessed Holy One made the world, as is written: *Because six days YHVH made heaven and earth* (Exodus 20:11). *Six days*—and not *in six days*, as we have already established.[57]

"*Consider the years of many generations*—that is, those *days of the world* will know and perceive all those years and days, and every single generation up to this generation in which you exist.[58]

"*Ask your father, and he will tell you* (Deuteronomy 32:7)—the blessed Holy One, as is written: *Is He not your father, your creator?* (ibid., 6). ויגדך (*Ve-yaggedekha*), *And he will tell you*—He will reveal the depth of Wisdom. What is that? Well, when those six days fashioned the world, they did so only for you, that you would come and fulfill the Torah. For we have learned: 'All that the blessed Holy One made, He made on the following condition: that when Israel would appear, if they accepted the Torah, fine; and if not, all would revert to *chaos and void* (Genesis 1:2).' So those *days of the world* know and perceive the matter.[59]

"We have learned how those branches of the Tree are joined to it; and as we have established, the blessed Holy One then selected shield-bearing chieftains over the other nations. But of you, what is written? *Indeed, YHVH's share is His people, Jacob His allotted possession* (Deuteronomy 32:9)—for He has not yielded them to any minister, angel, or other chieftain.[60]

"This people that the blessed Holy One took as His share, where did He find them? As is written: *He found him in a wilderness land, in the emptiness of a howling desert…* (Deuteronomy 32:10). For it is written: *Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor…. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates…* (Joshua 24:2–3).

Since then, He guided Israel in every single generation, never separating from them; He guided them with compassion, as is written: *Like an eagle rousing his nest…* (Deuteronomy 32:11)."[61]

Like an eagle rousing his nest…. Rabbi Yose said, "We have found no creature so compassionate to its young as the eagle. Concerning this we have learned that it is written *on the right a lion's face, and on the left a bull's face* (Ezekiel 1:10). Where is the location of the eagle? In the place where Jacob stands, as is written: *the way of the eagle in the heavens* (Proverbs 30:19)—in that very place. Why? Because it manifests compassion upon its young and judgment toward others. So the blessed Holy One guides His children like the eagle.[62]

"What is written? *YHVH alone did lead him, no alien god by His side* (Deuteronomy 32:12)—He alone, as is written: *YHVH was going before them…* (Exodus 13:21). *No alien god by His side*—for Israel was not led by an angel nor by another chieftain, who are called *alien god*. This is what Moses said: *If Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here!* (ibid. 33:15). As is written: *YHVH alone did lead him*—He alone, *no alien god by His side*.[63]

"Happy is the share of Israel, that the blessed Holy One guides them so! Of them is written *For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His treasure* (Psalms 135:4). And it is written: *For YHVH will not abandon His people, for the sake of His great name* (1 Samuel 12:22). Why is it that *YHVH will not abandon His people? For the sake of His great name*—because one clings to the other. So the blessed Holy One will not forsake them: wherever they dwell, He is with them, as we have established."[64]

Were they wise, they would contemplate this (Deuteronomy

Rabbi Yose said, "All these verses here are rebukes with which Moses reprimanded

32:29).[65] Israel, except for that Holy Name that he revealed at the beginning of his words."[66]

Rabbi Abba said, "Even his rebukes of Israel are included in the Holy Name, for there is no word in Torah that escapes the category of the Holy Name, since the entire Torah is the name of the blessed Holy One.[67]

"These verses are well known. But since the name [299a] of the blessed Holy One is inscribed in this portion, we have had to [explain] until now. And here is written *Were they wise, they would contemplate* זאת (*zot*), *this*—*zot*, surely! In many places we have established that if Israel knew how *zot* grasps its judgments to exact retribution from the wicked, *they would understand their final end* (Deuteronomy 32:29) and would be careful to be [at peace] with Her, as is written: *Earth will rise up against him* (Job 20:27).[68]

"Alternatively, *Were they wise, they would contemplate* זאת (*zot*), *this*—that She is linked to Israel when they keep the commandments of Torah and dwell with Her in peace; then they would know that they have the help of *zot* to retaliate against their enemies. The people of Israel, who are small among the nations, would know *how one could pursue a thousand, or two put a myriad to flight* (Deuteronomy 32:30). Who enabled them? *Zot*, who is at peace with them when they fulfill the commandments of Torah, and never departs from them, wreaking vengeance for them.[69]

"*Unless their Rock had sold them and YHVH had handed them over* (Deuteronomy 32:30). Why *had their Rock sold them*? Because *The Rock that bore you*, תשי (*teshi*), *you weakened* (ibid., 18)—for the adornments do not appear in their proper place."[70]

Unless their Rock had sold them. Rabbi Yehudah said, "This is Abraham, as we have established. For Abraham

said, ‘Let Israel be condemned to exile rather than entering Hell, for both of these—exile and Hell—they cannot endure.’ And the blessed Holy One consented, that whenever Israel would sin they would fall into exile and be subjugated by their enemies. Thus, *their Rock had sold them*, surely! *And YHVH had handed them over*, consenting with him.”[71]

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, “Why did Moses reprove them like this in this song? Because they were about to enter the Land and ensconce *Shekhinah* in their midst, so he admonished them about this.”[72]

Rabbi Yitsḥak said, “In two places the blessed Holy One intends to reprove Israel, with the nations of the world rejoicing. The first, as is written: *YHVH has an indictment against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways…* (Hosea 12:3). The nations of the world hear and rejoice, saying, ‘Now they will be annihilated from the world!’ When the blessed Holy One sees them rejoicing, what is written next? *In the womb he seized his brother by the heel…* (ibid., 4). When [the nations] hear this, they say, ‘What kind of response is this?’

“A parable. A woman had a quarrel with her son, and she went to bring charges against him. She saw the judge trying capital cases—sentencing some to be whipped, some to be crucified, some to be burned. She said, ‘Woe is me! What will I do with my son?’

“When [the judge] completed the cases, he said to that woman, ‘Tell me what your son did to you?’

“She replied, ‘I complain that when he was in my womb he kicked me.’

“He said, ‘This is your complaint against your son? Go, for you have no case at all!’

“Similarly, the blessed Holy One said, *YHVH has an indictment* [*against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways…*]. After the other nations rejoice, He says, *In the womb he seized his brother by the heel….*

“They retort, ‘This is the imperious accusation that the blessed Holy One brings against His children?’

“The second reproof, as is written: *Come let us contend —says YHVH* (Isaiah 1:18). The nations of the world hear and rejoice, saying, ‘Now they will be annihilated from the world, for their Lord comes upon them imperiously.’ As soon as the blessed Holy One sees their joy, what is written next? *If your sins are like scarlet, they will turn white as snow; if they are red as crimson, they will become like fleece* (ibid.).”[73]

REFERENCE MATTER

Abbreviations

ABD	David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
add.	addendum, addenda
Add.	Additional
Arukh	Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome, *Sefer he-Arukh*
Arukh ha-Shalem	Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome, *Arukh ha-Shalem*
Ateret Tsevi	Ẓevi Hirsch Eichenstein, *Ateret Tsevi*
Battei Midrashot	Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer, ed., *Battei Midrashot*
B.C.E.	before the Common Era
Beit ha-Midrash	Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Beit ha-Midrash*
Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot	Boaz Huss, ed. *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot she-be-Sefer ha-Zohar*
Bei'urei ha-Gera	Elijah ben Solomon of Vilna, "Leqet Bei'urei ha-Gera"
BT	Babylonian Talmud
C.E.	Common Era
Cremona	Cremona edition of the *Zohar*
Derekh Emet	*Derekh Emet*, in *Sefer ha-Zohar*, ed. Reuven Margaliot
Derekh Emet (ed. Ḥamiẓ)	Joseph Ḥamiẓ, ed., *Derekh Emet*

diss.	dissertation
ed.	editor (plural, eds.); edition; edited by
Edri	Yehuda Edri, trans., *Sefer ha-Zohar*
Emet le-Ya'aqov	Jacob Maragi, *Emet le-Ya'aqov*
Es3	MS G-I-15, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain
esp.	especially
frag.	fragmentary
Galante	Abraham Galante, in *Or ha-Ḥammah*, ed. Abraham Azulai
Hadrat Melekh	Shalom Buzaglo, *Hadrat Melekh*
Haggahot Maharḥu	Ḥayyim Vital, *Haggahot Maharḥu*
Hash	*Hashmatot*
Heikh	*Heikhalot*
intro	introduction
IR	*Idra Rabba*
IZ	*Idra Zuta*
J3	MS Heb. 8° 490, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
JT	Jerusalem Talmud
L3	MS Add. 26929, British Library, London
M	Mishnah
M9	MS Hebr. 219, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
Ma'arikh	Menaḥem ben Judah de Lonzano, *Sefer ha-Ma'arikh*
Mantua	Mantua edition of the *Zohar*
Mat	*Matnitin*
Matoq mi-	Daniel Frisch, *Peirush Matoq mi-Devash*

Devash	
MhN	*Midrash ha-Ne’lam*
Miqdash Melekh	Shalom Buzaglo, *Miqdash Melekh*
MS	manuscript
n. (plural, nn.)	note(s)
N10	MS 1660, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N18	MS 1743, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N32	MS 1800, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N36	MS 1916, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N38	MS 1927, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N49	MS 2203, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
n.d.	no date
Nefesh David	David Luria, *Nefesh David*
Nitsotsei Orot	Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai, *Nitsotsei Orot*
Nitsotsei Zohar	Reuven Margaliot, *Nitsotsei Zohar*
n.p.	no publisher
OM1	MS 77 h 22, Oxford University, Merton College
Omer Man	Menaḥem de Lonzano, *Omer Man*
Or Yaqar	Moses Cordovero, *Or Yaqar*
P5	MS héb. 782, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris

par.	paragraph
Pereq Shirah	Malachi Beit-Arié, ed., *Pereq Shirah*
Piq	*Piqqudin*
pl.	plural
Pr13	MS 351, Biblioteca Palatina, Parma
QhM	*Qav ha-Middah*
R1	MS 2971, Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome
RM	*Ra'aya Meheimna*
RR	*Raza de-Razin*
Scholem	Gershom Scholem, *Sefer ha-Zohar shel Gershom Shalom*
SdTs	*Sifra di-Tsni'uta*
Sha'arei ha-Idra	Yosef Lieberman, *Sha'arei ha-Idra*
ShS	*Shir ha-Shirim*
sing.	singular
SO	*Sitrei Otiyyot*
Soncino	Harry Sperling et al., trans., *The Zohar* (Soncino Press)
ST	*Sitrei Torah*
Sullam	Yehudah Ashlag, *Sefer ha-Zohar… im… ha-Sullam*
The Anatomy of God	Roy Rosenberg, *The Anatomy of God*
Tiq	*Tiqqunim* (in *Zohar Ḥadash*)
Tos	*Tosefta*
trans.	translator(s); translated by
TZ	*Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*
V3	MS ebr. 199, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V5	MS ebr. 206, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican

V18	MS Neofiti 25, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V19	MS Neofiti 43, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V20	MS ebr. 606, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V22	MS ebr. 186, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
Vital	Ḥayyim Vital, in *Or ha-Ḥammah*, ed. Abraham Azulai
Yafah Sha’ah	Shelomoh ben Yehudah ha-Kohen, *Yafah Sha’ah*
Yahel Or	Elijah ben Solomon of Vilna, *Yahel Or*
Yayin ha-Reqaḥ	Yehudah Petaya, *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*
ZḤ	*Zohar Ḥadash*

Transliteration of Hebrew and Aramaic

א	*alef*	’[1]	ל	*lamed*	*l*
בּ	*bet*	*b*	מ	*mem*	*m*
ב	*vet*	*v*	נ	*nun*	*n*
ג	*gimel*	*g*	ס	*samekh*	*s*
ד	*dalet*	*d*	ע	*ayin*	’[2]
ה	*he*	*h*	פּ	*pe*	*p*
ו	*vav*	*v*	פ	*phe*	*f*[3]
ז	*zayin*	*z*	צ	*tsadi*	*ts*
ח	*ḥet*	*ḥ*	ק	*qof*	*q*
ט	*tet*	*t*	ר	*resh*	*r*
י	*yod*	*y, i*	שׁ	*shin*	*sh*
כּ	*kaf*	*k*	שׂ	*sin*	*s*
כ	*khaf*	*kh*	ת	*tav*	*t*

The English equivalent letter is doubled when a strong *dagesh* in Hebrew or Aramaic characterizes a verbal conjugation or indicates an assimilated letter, e.g., *dibber, yitten*. However, if the Hebrew letter (in which a *dagesh* appears) is represented by two English letters (such as *sh* or *ts*), then that English equivalent is not doubled, e.g., *va-yishaqehu, matsot*. Further, a single English equivalent letter is not doubled when preceded by a hyphenated prefix, e.g., *ha-sefer, la-melekh, mi-tokh*.

Proper names that appear in roman type do not follow the above schema. Biblical names are rendered according to the *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Rabbinic names are rendered according to common convention, e.g., Akiva,

Resh Lakish. Medieval names are Anglicized, e.g., Moses de León, Joseph Gikatilla. Authors' names in the Bibliography follow library listings or the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

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1. *Alef* is not transliterated at the beginning or end of a word nor after a hyphenated prefix. Elsewhere it is transliterated only when accompanied by a vowel, e.g., *Shemu'el*.

2. *Ayin* is not transliterated at the beginning of a word, nor after a hyphenated prefix, nor, unless accompanied by a vowel, at the end of a word. Thus, *Shema*, but *Bava Metsi'a*.

3. Occasionally transliterated as *ph* to compare or contrast it to the letter *pe*.

Glossary

aggadah, aggadta, pl. *aggadot, aggadata* "Tale"; the nonlegal contents of the Talmud and Midrash, often based on biblical exegesis. It includes ethical and moral teaching, theological speculation, legends, and folklore.

alef The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the beginning of divine and human speech.

Amidah "Standing"; the central prayer, recited three times daily.

Arikh Anpin "Slow to anger, long-suffering, forbearing, patient"; the highest sefirotic realm, characterized by pure love and compassion (corresponding to *Keter*). See above, pp. 22–23, n. 57.

Assembly of Israel Hebrew, כנסת ישראל (*Keneset Yisra'el*); in rabbinic literature, a phrase normally denoting the people of Israel. In the *Zohar*, the phrase can refer to the earthly community of Israel but also (often primarily) to *Shekhinah*, the divine feminine counterpart of the people. See above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

Attiqa Qaddisha "The Holy Ancient One;" the most ancient manifestation of *Ein Sof* through *Keter*, Its crown.

Ayin "Nothingness"; the creative "no-thingness" of God, out of which all being emanates.

Binah "Understanding"; the third *sefirah*; the Divine Mother who gives birth to the seven lower *sefirot*.

blessed Holy One Common rabbinic name for God. In the *Zohar* it often designates *Tif'eret*, or *Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him.

Companions The close circle of disciples around Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

Da'at "Knowledge"; the hidden *sefirah* mediating between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

Din "Judgment"; the fifth *sefirah*; the left arm of the divine body, balancing *Ḥesed*. The roots of evil lie here; also called *Gevurah*.

Dwelling Hebrew, משכן (*mishkan*). The portable sanctuary (or Tabernacle), which according to Exodus was constructed by Moses and the Israelites, and then carried from encampment to encampment as the people journeyed through the Sinai Desert. In the *Zohar*, often a symbol of *Shekhinah*.

Eikhah The book of Lamentations.

Ein Sof "There is no end"; that which is boundless; the Infinite. The ultimate reality of God beyond all specific qualities of the *sefirot*; the God beyond God.

Elohim "God, gods"; a biblical name for God. In the *Zohar* it has various sefirotic associations: *Binah, Gevurah, Shekhinah*.

Gedullah "Greatness"; the fourth *sefirah*; the outpouring of God's great goodness; also called *Ḥesed*.

Geonic Pertaining to the period or literature of the Geonim (the heads of central governing councils and academies based in the Land of Israel and in Babylonia), which extended from approximately 600 to 1040 C.E..

Gevurah "Power"; the fifth *sefirah*; also called *Din*.

gimatriyya, pl. ***gimatriyya'ot*** Derived from the Greek *geometria* ("measuring the earth"); a method of interpretation based on the numerical value of Hebrew letters.

halakhah, pl. ***halakhot*** "Practice, law, legal decision," from the root הלך (*hlkh*), "to walk": the way that one should follow.

Hashmatot "Omissions"; additions printed at the end of the first of the three standard Aramaic volumes of the

Zohar, drawn from the Cremona edition and *Zohar Ḥadash*.

ḥasid, pl. ***ḥasidim*** "Pious one," devotee, saint, lover of God.

ḥayyot "Living beings, beasts"; the angels who carried the Chariot-Throne, as described by the prophet Ezekiel.

Heikhalot "Palaces"; descriptions of the heavenly and demonic palaces in *Zohar* 1:38a–45b; 2:244b–268b.

Ḥesed "Loving-kindness, love, grace"; the fourth *sefirah*; the right arm of the divine body, balancing *Din*; also called *Gedullah*.

Hod "Splendor"; the eighth *sefirah*; the left leg of the divine body; source of prophecy along with *Netsaḥ*.

Ḥokhmah "Wisdom"; the second *sefirah*; the primordial point of emanation.

Holy Ancient One The most ancient manifestation of *Ein Sof* through *Keter*, Its crown.

idra "Threshing place," assembly. See above, pp. 768–69, n. 7.

Idra Rabba "The Great Assembly"; a description of the gathering of Rabbi Shim'on and the Companions at the threshing house, where profound mysteries of divine being are expounded. *Zohar* 3:127b–145a.

Idra Zuta "The Small Assembly"; a description of the last gathering of Rabbi Shim'on and the Companions, the master's final teachings, and his ecstatic death. *Zohar* 3:287b–296b. See above, pp. 767–849.

Israel Often, the people of Israel.

Jubilee The year of release, occurring every fifty years at the end of the cycle of seven sabbatical years. According to Leviticus 25, in the Jubilee all land reverts to its original owners and all indentured Israelite slaves are freed. In Kabbalah, often a symbol of *Binah*.

Kabbalah Hebrew, קבלה (*qabbalah*), "receiving, that which is received, tradition"; originally referring to tradition in general (or to post-Mosaic Scripture), but from

the thirteenth century onward, specifically to the esoteric teachings of Judaism.

Kaddish "Holy"; an Aramaic prayer praising God, recited at the conclusion of each main part of every service.

Keter "Crown"; the first *sefirah*; coeternal with *Ein Sof*; also called *Ratson* ("Will") and *Ayin* ("Nothingness").

Lilith A demoness who harms babies and seduces men; married to Samael.

lulav "Sprout"; rabbinic term for the palm branch used together with three other plant species on the festival of *Sukkot*.

Malkhut "Kingdom"; the tenth *sefirah*, ruling the lower worlds; also called *Shekhinah*.

Matnitin "Our Mishnah"; short pieces scattered throughout the *Zohar*, most of which appear as utterances of a heavenly voice urging the Companions to arouse themselves and open their hearts to the mysteries. Some of them contain principles of kabbalistic teaching in a condensed form, constituting a kind of mystical Mishnah, expounded in the main section of the *Zohar*.

Matronita Aramaized form of Latin *matrona*, "matron, married woman, noble lady," often applied in the *Zohar* to *Shekhinah*, the wife of *Tif'eret*.

Metatron One of the supreme powers in the divine realm, often depicted as the chief angel. He is sometimes identified as *sar ha-panim* (Prince of the Countenance), standing face-to-face with God, or as *sar ha-olam* (Prince of the World).

midrash, pl. **midrashim** Homiletical or legal interpretation of the Bible.

Midrash ha-Ne'lam "The Concealed Midrash, the Esoteric Midrash"; an early stratum of the *Zohar*. Its language is a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic. *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* on the Torah pertains to several portions of Genesis, the beginning of Exodus, and several other portions; it is printed partly alongside the main text of the *Zohar* and

partly in *Zohar Ḥadash*. *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* on Song of Songs, Ruth, and Lamentations is printed in *Zohar Ḥadash*. The subject matter of *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* is mostly Creation, the soul, and the world to come; its style is often allegorical.

minḥah "Offering"; second of the three daily prayer services, recited in the afternoon.

Mishnah Collection of oral teachings compiled near the beginning of the third century by Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi; the earliest codification of Jewish Oral Law; the core of the Talmud.

mitsvah, pl. ***mitsvot*** "Commandment"; one of the 613 commandments of the Torah or one of various rabbinic precepts; religious duty; by extension, good deed.

nefesh "Soul," life force; the basic level of the soul, animating the human being. (The other two levels are *ruaḥ* and *neshamah*.)

neshamah "Breath, soul," soul-breath; the highest level of the soul. (The other two levels are *nefesh* and *ruaḥ*.)

Netsaḥ "Endurance"; the seventh *sefirah*; the right leg of the divine body; source of prophecy along with *Hod*.

Omer "Sheaf" of newly harvested barley; the seven-week period of ceremonially counting days during the harvest season between the second day of *Pesaḥ* and the eve of *Shavu'ot*. The homonyn *omer* is a unit of dry measure, about two quarts.

Oral Torah The rabbinic interpretation of the Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses); in Kabbalah, a symbol of *Shekhinah*.

Other Side Aramaic, סטרא אחרא (*Sitra Aḥra*); the demonic realm, or the shadow of the divine, led by Samael and Lilith.

parashah, pl. ***parashot*** "Portion"; portion of the Torah read on a particular Sabbath, named after its opening word (or phrase) or a key word (or phrase) in the opening sentences.

Pesaḥ “Passover”; first of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated in the middle of the month of Nisan, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

Piqqudin “Commandments”; kabbalistic interpretations of the commandments scattered throughout the *Zohar* (to be distinguished from *Ra’aya Meheimna*).

Qav ha-Middah “The Standard of Measure”; a detailed description of the process of divine emanation, delivered by Rabbi Shim’on. *Zohar Ḥadash* 56d–58d.

Qedushah “Sanctification”; one of several prayers describing the sanctification of God by the angels in heaven and its imitation on earth by the people of Israel.

Qiddush “Sanctification”; a ceremony and prayer proclaiming the holiness of Sabbath or a festival. The *Qiddush* is recited over a cup of wine immediately before the meal.

Ra’aya Meheimna “The Faithful Shepherd”; a separate composition on the kabbalistic meaning of the commandments, printed piecemeal in the *Zohar*. Here Moses, the Faithful Shepherd, appears to Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions, revealing secrets.

Raḥamim “Compassion”; the sixth *sefirah*, harmonizing the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Din*; also called *Tif’eret*.

Raza de-Razin “The Secret of Secrets”; a section of the *Zohar* dealing with physiognomy, metoposcopy, and chiromancy (*Zohar* 2:70a–75a [printed alongside the main text], *Zohar Ḥadash* 35b–37c). A second version is incorporated into the main body of the *Zohar* (2:70a–78a).

Rosh Hashanah The Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first two days of the Hebrew month Tishrei.

ruaḥ “Spirit, wind, breath”; the second level of soul. (The other two levels are *nefesh* and *neshamah*.)

Rut The book of Ruth.

Samael Prince of demons, married to Lilith; identical with Satan.

Sava "The Elder; old man."

Sava de-Mishpatim "Old Man of [Torah portion] *Mishpatim*"; an account of the Companions' encounter with a donkey-driver who turns out to be a master of wisdom. *Zohar* 2:94b–114a.

Sefer ha-Zohar "The Book of Radiance."

sefirah, pl. ***sefirot*** Literally, "counting," number, numerical entity; in Kabbalah, one of the ten aspects of divine personality, nine of which emanate from *Ein Sof* and the first *sefirah, Keter*. See the diagram on page ix.

Shaddai An obscure divine name, which may originally have meant "[God of] the mountain."

Shavu'ot "Weeks"; second of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated seven weeks after the beginning of Passover.

Shekhinah "Presence," divine immanence; the tenth and last *sefirah*; female partner of *Tif'eret*; also called *Malkhut*.

Shema Literally, "hear"; central prayer recited morning and evening, comprising Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; and Numbers 15:37–41. The opening verse is: *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one!*

Shir ha-Shirim The book of Song of Songs.

Sifra di-Tsni'uta "The Book of Concealment"; an anonymous, highly condensed commentary on the beginning of the Torah, consisting of five short chapters and composed in obscure sentences. Its subject is the mysterious dynamics of divine being. *Zohar* 2:176b–179a.

Sitra Aḥra "The other side"; the demonic realm, or the shadow of the divine, led by Samael and Lilith.

Sitrei Otiyyot "Secrets of the Letters"; a discourse by Rabbi Shim'on focusing on the letters of the divine name *YHVH* and how they symbolize the process of emanation. *Zohar Ḥadash* 1b–7b.

Sitrei Torah "Secrets of Torah"; interpretations of certain verses of Genesis, printed in separate columns

parallel to the main body of the *Zohar* and in *Zohar Ḥadash*. It includes allegorical explanations of the mysteries of the soul.

Sukkot "Booths"; festival of Booths, last of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated in the middle of the month of Tishrei at the conclusion of the summer harvest.

tallit A prayer shawl with a tzitzit on each corner.

Talmud Each of the two compilations of Jewish law, legend, ethics, and theology comprising the Mishnah and its vast commentary (the Gemara) by rabbis of the third through fifth centuries. The Jerusalem Talmud was compiled ca. 400 C.E.; the Babylonian Talmud, about one hundred years later.

tanna, pl. ***tanna'im*** "One who repeats, teacher"; an authority cited in the Mishnah or belonging to the Mishnaic period (first two centuries of the Common Era); an Amoraic scholar whose task was to memorize and recite tannaitic texts.

Targum "Translation"; an Aramaic translation of the Torah or the Bible.

tav The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

tefillin, sing. ***tefillah*** "Phylacteries"; two black leather boxes containing passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) written on parchment. They are bound by black leather straps on the left arm and on the head, and are prescribed for men to wear during weekday morning prayer. Each of the biblical passages indicates that the Children of Israel should place a sign upon their hand and a frontlet (or reminder) between their eyes.

teshuvah "Return, turning back to God, repentance."

Tif'eret "Beauty, glory"; the sixth *sefirah*, harmonizing the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Din*; male partner of *Shekhinah*; the torso of the divine body; also called *Raḥamim*.

Tiqqunei ha-Zohar "Embellishments on the *Zohar*"; an independent book whose setting is similar to *Ra'aya Meheimna*. It comprises a commentary on the beginning of Genesis, each *tiqqun* opening with a new interpretation of the word בראשית (*be-reshit*), "in the beginning."

Tiqqunim "Embellishments"; additional material in the genre of *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, printed in *Zohar Ḥadash* 93c–122b.

Tish'ah be-Av "The ninth day of [the lunar month] Av," on which traditionally both the First and Second Temples were destroyed.

Torah "Instruction, teaching"; the Five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); by extension, the entire corpus of Jewish religious literature.

Tosafot, sing. ***Tosefet*** "Additions"; a collection of comments on the Talmud written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries in France and Germany, printed in standard editions of the Talmud. Also, a set of Zoharic additions printed at the end of the second and third of the three standard Aramaic volumes of the *Zohar*, drawn from the Cremona edition and from *Zohar Ḥadash*.

Tosefta "Addition"; in rabbinic literature, a collection of precepts parallel to and contemporary with the Mishnah. In the *Zohar*, a collection similar to *Matnitin*.

Tsaddiq "Righteous One"; a name for *Yesod*, the ninth *sefirah*.

tzitzit "Tassel," one of four affixed to the hem of a garment, and later of a prayer shawl. See Numbers 15:37–41.

world that is coming Hebrew, העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*); Aramaic, עלמא דאתי (*alma de-atei*); often understood as referring to the hereafter and usually translated as "the world to come." From another perspective, however, "the world that is coming" already exists—occupying another, timeless dimension. In Kabbalah this phrase often refers to

Binah, the continuous source of emanation, who is "coming constantly and never ceasing."

Written Torah The Five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); in Kabbalah, a symbol of *Tif'eret*.

Yah A contracted biblical form of the divine name *YHVH*.

Yesod "Foundation"; the ninth *sefirah*, who channels the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*; the phallus of the divine body; also called *Tsaddiq*.

YHVH The ineffable name of God, probably deriving from the root הוה (*hvh*), "to be." In the *Zohar* it often symbolizes *Tif'eret*.

YHVH Tseva'ot Literally, "*YHVH* of armies [or: hosts]."

Yom Kippur The Day of Atonement, observed on the tenth of the Hebrew month Tishrei.

Ze'eir Anpin "Short-tempered, irascible, impatient"; the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* (or *Ḥesed*) through *Yesod*, characterized by a tension between opposites: right versus left, *Ḥesed* versus *Din*. See above, pp. 22–23, n. 57; pp. 773–74, n. 21.

zohar "Radiance, splendor."

Zohar Ḥadash "New Zohar"; a collection of Zoharic texts not included in the early editions of the *Zohar*. It was first printed in Salonika in 1597. The title is misleading since *Zohar Ḥadash* contains much of *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, an early stratum of the *Zohar*.

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1. For a list of eighty-four *Zohar* manuscripts, see Rubin, "Mif'al ha-Zohar," 172–73.

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1. ***YHVH spoke to Moses…*** The full verse reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, "Send for yourself men, that they may scout the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Children of Israel. One man each for his father's tribe, you are to send, every one of them a chieftain."*

2. ***Have you ever in your life…*** The quotation is from God's speech to Job out of the whirlwind (38:12–13): *Have you ever in your life commanded morning*, ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn, its place, to seize the corners of the earth, so that the wicked will be shaken from it?* The wording ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn*, represents the Masoretic text as it is read (known as *qere*, "[that which is] read"). The alternative wording—ידעתה שחר (*yiddatah shaḥar*), *assigned dawn*—represents the text as it is written (known as *ketiv*, "[that which is] written").

Here Rabbi Ḥiyya first quotes the former wording—ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn*—and then asks why in the latter wording—ידעתה שחר (*yiddatah shaḥar*), *assigned dawn*—the letter ה (*he*) is separated from שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*. His answer appears eventually, below at note 13.

3. **When evening extends…** The sun symbolizes *Tif'eret*, and as sunlight begins to fade, powers of Judgment on the left begin to dominate. Then is the time to recite *minḥah* (the afternoon prayer) in order to assuage Judgment.

On the quality of the time of *minḥah* and the assuagement of Judgment, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 132b, 182b, 230a; 2:21a (*MhN*), 36b, 88b, 156a; 3:64b, 129a (*IR*), 226b, 288b (*IZ*), 293a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 87; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:963–64.

4. **Isaac digs a well below** This patriarch symbolizes *Gevurah*, whose flow of emanation reaches *Shekhinah*, symbolized by a well.

On Isaac digging a well, see Genesis 26:18–19, 25. According to rabbinic tradition, Isaac instituted *minḥah*. See BT *Berakhot* 26b: "Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina said,

‘The patriarchs instituted the prayers.’… Abraham instituted the morning prayer…. Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer…. Jacob instituted the evening prayer.” See JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a–b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9.

5. **As night enters…** Judgment prevails, and a decree (“slip”) appears in the heavenly ledger, authorizing harsh forces to “pluck” the wicked. These “ravaging bands” convey false information via dreams, interspersed with occasional accurate messages. Any person who ventures out alone at night becomes vulnerable.

The expression “toying with souls of the wicked” likely alludes to sexual arousal. See *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Vol. 5, p. 213, n. 68.

According to BT *Berakhot* 55b, angels convey prophetic dreams, whereas demons convey false ones. In the *Zohar*, demonic forces often convey false information through deceitful dreams, while if the information is accurate, it usually concerns only events that are soon to unfold.

See *Zohar* 1:83a, 130a–b, 150b, 183a, 199b–200a, 238a; 2:130a, 195b, 251b (*Heikh*), 264a (*Heikh*), 267a (*Heikh*); 3:25a, 48b, 52b, 76b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:809–14. On the demons’ limited knowledge of the future, see BT *Berakhot* 18b, *Ḥagigah* 16a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 3; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 7; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:83a, 130a, 200a; 2:195b, 251b (*Heikh*); 3:25a.

On sleep as a taste of death, see BT *Berakhot* 57b: “Sleep is one-sixtieth of death.” See *Zohar* 1:36a–b, 53b, 169b, 184b, 207a; 2:173a, 195b, 215b; 3:119a, 120b–121a, 178a, 234b, 260a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 52–53.

The phrase “a slip of plucking” renders פתקא דקוטפא (*pitqa de-qutpa*). *Pitqa* (note, slip, memorandum, name slip carried by the Angel of Death) derives from Greek *pittakion*, “tablet, written message, note.” See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:2; *Zohar* 1:220a (standard editions); 3:15a (Vol. 7, p. 92, n. 280), 99a

(*Piq*), 149b; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 185, s.v. *pitqa*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 120, n. 52.

The term "ledger" renders אחמתא (*aḥmeta*). This word appears in Ezra 6:2 as the name of the ancient capital of the Medes (modern Hamadan), but the context mentions archives and treasures: *Thereupon, at the order of King Darius, they searched the archives* [literally: *house of the books*] *where the treasures were stored in Babylon. And in the citadel of Aḥmeta in the province of Media, a scroll was found in which a memorandum was written*. Rashi and Ibn Ezra, ad loc., quote an interpretation of *aḥmeta* as "a vessel" for letters and scrolls. (Cf. Hebrew חמת [*ḥemet*], "[goat's] skin," containing water or wine.) In *Targum* to Esther 1:4, אחמיתין (*aḥmitin*) means "vessels" containing gold and gems. In the *Zohar, aḥmeta* can refer to a treasure-house, treasury, archive, or ledger.

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander) 50; *Zohar* 1:220a (standard editions); 2:97a; 3:149b, 154b, 166b, 172a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 173, s.v. *aḥmeta*; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Liebes, "Shimmushan shel Millim," 17–18; idem, *Peraqim*, 346.

6. **When a north wind is aroused...** At midnight, when the divine couple begins to unite. *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is embraced by *Gevurah* (the divine left arm), symbolized by the direction north, and the blessed Holy One delights with the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. This is an auspicious time for devotees to rise from sleep and engage in Torah, thereby participating with *Shekhinah* in praising the Divine King.

See BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "There was a harp suspended above [King] David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn." See Psalms 119:62.

In the *Zohar* this legendary custom is expanded into a ritual, which parallels the midnight vigil common among Christian monks from early medieval times. In *Zohar* 3:119a, Rabbi Yehudah may be alluding to the Christian practice: "… the nations of the world, whom I have seen in the same manner." See *Zohar* 1:92b; Vol. 2, pp. 82–83, nn. 632–35.

On the passage in *Berakhot* and the midnight ritual, see also JT *Berakhot* 1:1, 2d; *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 3:3, 111b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beha'alotekha* 19; *Aggadat Bereshit* 23:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 102a; 2 Enoch 8:3; *Zohar* 1:10b, 72a, 77a–b, 82b, 92a–b, 136a–b, 178a–b, 194b, 206b–207b, 231a–232a, 242b; 2:26b–27a, 30a, 36b, 46a, 56b–57a, 67b, 130a–b, 136a, 173b, 195b–196a, 209a; 3:11a, 12b–13a, 21b–22b, 23b, 44a–b, 49b, 52b, 65a, 67b–68a, 81a, 90a, 107b–108a, 113a–b, 119a, 166b, 171b, 193a–b, 213a–b, 260a; *ZḤ* 13b–c (*MhN*), 86c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54; [idem?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 294 (138); Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 146–50; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 121–45. See also the comment by Sherira Gaon in *Teshuvot Ge'onei Mizraḥ u-Ma'arav*, 141: "It was a custom of חסידות (*ḥasidut*), piety (or devotion), to rise at midnight and utter songs and praises." Cf. BT *Tamid* 32b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya: "Whoever engages in Torah at night—*Shekhinah* faces him."

The concluding clause ("and these are distinguished during the day") may allude to the tradition recorded in BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, in the name of Resh Lakish: "To one who engages in Torah by night, the blessed Holy One extends a thread of love by day, as is said: *By day YHVH directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. See below, pp. 501–2, n. 5.

In rabbinic literature the phrase כנסת ישראל (*Keneset Yisra'el*), "Assembly of Israel," usually denotes the people of Israel. The Midrash on the Song of Songs describes an

allegorical love affair between the maiden (the earthly community of Israel) and her lover (the Holy One, blessed be He). In the *Zohar,* *Keneset Yisra'el* can refer to the earthly community but also (often primarily) to *Shekhinah*, the divine feminine counterpart of the people, the aspect of God most intimately connected with them. The lovers in the Song of Songs are pictured as a divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. For rabbinic roots of this mythical view of Assembly of Israel, see BT *Berakhot* 35b; *Pesaḥim* 118b; Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth*, 42–54.

7. **There is one Holy Name...** Rabbi Ḥiyya spells out this name below (at note 12). Here he simply says that it is associated with the letters מ נ צ פ כ (*mem, nun, tsadi, pe, kaf*). These five letters are distinguished by the fact that in addition to their normal forms they also have special final forms appearing at the end of a word. Once in the entire Bible, the final form of the letter מ (*mem*)—which is ם—appears out of place, before the end of a word, in the verse from Isaiah: למרבה (*le-marbeh*), *of the increase of, dominion*.

On the five final letters, see BT *Shabbat* 104a: "[The final forms of the letters] מ נ צ פ כ (*mem, nun, tsadi, pe, kaf*) were declared by צופים (*tsofim*), the Seers." See JT *Megillah* 1:9, 71d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:11 (and Theodor's note, ad loc.); BT *Megillah* 2b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 48; *Tanḥuma, Qoraḥ* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:21; *Zohar* 1:101a (*ST*); *ZḤ* 66c–d (*ShS*).

In the *Zohar* the final ם (*mem*) often symbolizes *Binah*. See *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:127a–b, 135a, 180a; 3:66b, 236b, 285b; *ZḤ* 5c (*SO*), 38c, 41d, 72b–d (*ShS*). On the esoteric nature of the final ם (*mem*), see BT *Shabbat* 104a: "The Rabbis told Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: 'Children have now come to the house of study and said things unparalleled even in the days of Joshua son of Nun:... Open מ (*mem*) and closed ם (*mem*): open saying and sealed saying.'" See also Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *ma'amar patuaḥ*; *Bahir* 57–58 (84–86); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 148–50.

Regarding the strange form לסרבה (*le-marbeh*), according to a Masoretic list, this word is written as two words (לם רבה) and read as one. See *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.; Weil, ed., *Massorah Gedolah*, 26, § 214. For modern scholarly discussion, see Driver, "Problems of the Hebrew Text and Language," 49; Wildberger, *Isaiah*, 387, 405. For rabbinic and kabbalistic interpretations, see BT *Sanhedrin* 94a; *Soferim* 7:3; *Rut Rabbah* 7:2; *Midrash Ḥaserot vi-Yterot*, 185 (*Battei Midrashot* 2:302); *Zohar* 1:34b; 3:285b; *ZḤ* 5c (*SO*), 72c (*ShS*); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 149–50.

For various interpretations of this difficult passage (extending below to note 12), see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

8. **ם (*Mem*) was concealed...** *Binah* was concealed, including *Ḥokhmah* within Herself. *Ḥokhmah*, the primordial point, is symbolized by the letter י (*yod*). *Binah*, the Divine Mother, gave birth to all the lower *sefirot*, following which She was symbolized by the partially open form of the letter מ (*mem*).

9. **When the Temple was destroyed...** When this catastrophe occurred, the springs of emanation issuing from *Binah* were sealed.

The seven "other letters" may correspond to the seven lower *sefirot* emerging from *Binah*. Three of these—כ ל ך (*kaf, lamed*, final *kaf*)—immediately precede the letter מ (*mem*) in the alphabet. The other four are specified below. The letters כ ל ך (*kaf, lamed*, final *kaf*) constitute the opening word of the verse in Song of Songs.

10. **ן (*Nun*)—male and female...** The final ן (*nun*) symbolizes the union of male and female.

For various interpretations of the concluding sentence, see the sources listed above, end of note 7. On the straight ן (*nun*) as symbolizing the union of male and female, see *Bahir* 56 (83); *Zohar* 1:18b–19a, 147a (*Tos*); 3:155a, 285b; *ZḤ* 70a (*ShS*).

11. **In these two letters...** The two final letters ם (*mem*) and ן (*nun*) somehow include twelve letters, namely the twelve letters of the name that follows. For other references to a Divine Name consisting of twelve letters, see below, p. 142, n. 275. For various interpretations of the concluding sentence, see the sources listed above, end of note 7.

12. **בל״ך סעפ״א אענצ״ה ...** This particular spelling of the Holy Name follows the reading in Es3, which differs (after the first six letters) from the spelling in other manuscripts and in the printed editions. As mentioned above (note 9), the first three letters—כ ל ך (*kaf, lamed*, final *kaf*)—immediately precede the letter מ (*mem*) in the alphabet. The next three letters—ס ע פ (*samekh, ayin, pe*)—immediately follow the letter נ (*nun*) in the alphabet. (These "words" include the Hebrew punctuation mark that signals an acronym.) For various interpretations of the last letter of the middle "word" and of the significance of the entire name, see the sources listed above, end of note 7.

As mentioned above (note 7), this mysterious Name is somehow related to the letters מ נ צ פ כ (*mem, nun, tsadi, pe, kaf*); and it rules from midnight on, assuaging the element of harsh Judgment that affects *Shekhinah* during the first half of the night.

The final sentence refers to a peculiarity in the spelling of the biblical word נערה (*na'arah*), *a girl* Numerous times in Genesis and Deuteronomy, this word is spelled נער (*na'ara*), without the concluding ה (*he*). Here Rabbi Ḥiyya quotes one such occurrence in the Torah portion *Ki Tetse la-Milḥamah, When You Go Out to War* (Deuteronomy 21:10–25:19). For him, the incomplete spelling alludes to the incomplete condition of *Shekhinah*, the Divine Female, who is symbolized by the letter ה (*he*). The fuller spelling—נערה (*na'arah*)—represents Her fulfilled state, which She attains after midnight.

The unusual spelling נער (*na'ara*) can also be read as נער (*na'ar*), "boy, youth," which often refers to the chief angel, Metatron. Sometimes Metatron appears as an embodiment

or manifestation of *Shekhinah*, so here Rabbi Ḥiyya may be contrasting this lower manifestation—נער (*na'ar*)—with *Shekhinah*'s higher manifestation as נערה (*na'arah*).

On נער (*na'ara*) and נערה (*na'arah*), see BT *Ketubbot* 40b; *Zohar* 1:51a; 2:38b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 115; *Minḥat Shai* on Deuteronomy 22:19. On Metatron as *na'ar* (youth, lad, [heavenly] servant), see 3 Enoch 4:10; Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, § 4; BT *Yevamot* 16b; *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *pasuq zeh*; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:12; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563; Vol. 5, p. 350, n. 453; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:628–29; Idel, *Ben*, 130–36. On *Shekhinah* appearing as Metatron, see Vol. 3, pp. 86–87, n. 9; Vol. 5, p. 348, n. 450.

13. **After night departs...** Then *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the letter ה (*he*), ascends and is absorbed in the light of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by *the dawn*. The phrase ידעת השחר (*yiddata ha-shaḥar*), *assigned the dawn*, alludes to this unified state, when *Shekhinah*—symbolized by ה (*he*), which in this phrase represents the definite article הַ (*ha*), *the*—is included with שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*. In the alternative wording of the phrase, the letter ה (*he*) is separated from שחר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*, and instead joined to the preceding word: ידעתה שחר (*yiddatah shaḥar*), *assigned dawn*. See above, note 2.

14. **Moses was the sun...** Moses attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the sun. He wanted to enter the Promised Land, associated with *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the moon. However, the blessed Holy One reminded him that the light of the sun is so powerful that it absorbs and overwhelms the light of the moon. If Moses were to enter the Land, the potency of *Tif'eret* would overwhelm *Shekhinah* and prevent Her from manifesting Her light there. See Moses de León, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 54.

Although Moses cannot enter the Land, God tells him that he can find out about it by sending scouts (or spies). The biblical wording שחר לך (*Shelaḥ lekha*), *Send for yourself*, now implies: "Send for your own sake."

On the significance of *for yourself* in this verse, see BT *Sotah* 34b; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 27, p. 144; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 1, 4, 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 1, 4, 8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1, 4, 8; Rashi, ad loc. Cf. Rashi on Genesis 12:1; *Zohar* 1:77b–78a; 254b (*Hash*); 2:32a, 219a–b; 3:17b (Vol. 7, p. 107, n. 326); *ZḤ* 71b (*ShS*). For the full verse, see above, note 1.

On the light of the sun as obscuring the light of the moon, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 6:3; BT *Ḥullin* 60b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:14; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 78a; Moses de León, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 54; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 149.

15. **If you say that Moses didn't know…** Rather, he did know—even prior to sending out the scouts—that he would die before entering the Promised Land.

According to the verses quoted here, God showed Moses the Land from Mount Abarim (probably the mountain range east of the Dead Sea) or Mount Nebo (one of the range's prominent peaks). Cf. Deuteronomy 32:49. In midrashic sources, Moses' view expands into a vision of all generations.

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 139; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:52; *Tanḥuma, Mas'ei* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mas'ei* 3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 23:5; *Zohar* 1:227b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 352. Cf. *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Sifrei*, Numbers 136; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 138; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 26:7; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 6, p. 183; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 40:2; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Exodus 4:13. On Moses' knowing that he was going to die, see Vol. 8, p. 540, n. 160.

16. היש בה עץ **(*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Is there a tree in it?…*** Moses certainly knew that there were trees in the land of Canaan, so his question must refer to a more lofty tree, namely the Tree of Life.

The clause "further on this matter will be discussed" refers to *Zohar* 3:158b (below at notes 54–57). The full

verse in Numbers reads: *“What is the land like, is it fat or lean?* הישׁ בה עץ (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Are there trees in it* [literally: *Is there a tree in it*], *or not? Exert yourselves* [or: *Summon your strength; Be courageous*] *and take some of the fruit of the land.” And the season was the season of the first ripe grapes*.

17. ***They found a man gathering* עצים (*etsim*), *wood…*** The simple sense of *etsim* in this verse is obviously *wood*, but here Rabbi Ḥiyya plays on its other meaning: “trees.”

The Bible does not record the name of the Sabbath wood-gatherer, but according to rabbinic tradition it was Zelophehad son of Hepher, who died without sons and whose five daughters then approached Moses, asking that their father’s inheritance be granted to them. See Numbers 27:1–11.

Here Rabbi Ḥiyya is playing on מקשש (*meqoshesh*), *gathering*, and מקיש (*maqqish*), “comparing.” Zelophehad was thus comparing two sefirotic trees: the Tree of Life (symbolizing *Tif’eret*) and the Tree of Knowledge (symbolizing *Shekhinah*). *Tif’eret* is identified with the Sabbath day, while *Shekhinah* represents Sabbath eve. Zelophehad’s sin was that he “switched one Sabbath for the other,” apparently meaning that he elevated the status of *Shekhinah* above *Tif’eret*, thereby blemishing the latter. The description of Zelophehad by his daughters in Numbers 27—בחטאו (*ve-ḥet’o*), *for his own sin, he died*—now implies that he died ו בחטא (*ve-ḥet vav*), *for the sin of* *vav*, that is, for sinning against *Tif’eret*, who is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*).

Zelophehad’s sin resembles the sin of Adam, who ate from the Tree of Knowledge, whereas according to the *Zohar* he should have united this Tree (*Shekhinah*) with the Tree of Life (*Tif’eret*). Through his tragic error, Adam separated *Shekhinah* from Her partner and brought death into the world. This type of sin is sometimes referred to as *qitsuts ba-neti’ot*, “severing the saplings.” See Vol. 1, pp. 222–23, n. 937; below, note 22.

The grave and mysterious nature of Zelophehad's sin explains why "his judgment was concealed" and his punishment was not stated earlier in the Torah—as indicated by Numbers 15:34: *They placed him under guard, for it had not been specified what should be done to him*.

On Zelophehad as the Sabbath wood-gatherer, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 105, 113, 133; *Sifrei Zuta* 15:32; 27:3; BT *Shabbat* 96b; *Zohar* 3:176b, 205b. On the nature of Adam's sin, see *Zohar* 1:12b, 35b–36a, 51a–52a, 53b, 221a–b; 2:194a–b; 3:86b, 107a–b, 122a; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 231–32, 236, 404–5, n. 105; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:373–76; Vol. 1, p. 298, n. 1438.

Numbers 15:32 reads in full: *The Children of Israel were in the desert, and they found a man gathering* עצים (*etsim*), *wood, on the Sabbath day*. The full verse in Numbers 27, spoken by Zelophehad's daughters, reads: *Our father died in the desert, and he was not part of the group that banded together against YHVH along with Korah's group; rather, for his own sin he died, and he had no sons*.

18. **He was *gathering* other *trees*...** Rabbi Yose offers a different interpretation: that Zelophehad was *gathering* (or comparing) other *trees*—namely other forces—with the sefirotic *Sabbath*. These "other *trees*" are angelic or demonic forces that rule on the weekdays (empowered by *Shekhinah*), while the sefirotic *Sabbath* is either *Tif'eret* or *Shekhinah*. Zelophehad compared or confused the "other trees" with the divine Sabbath. See *Zohar* 3:176b. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

According to Numbers 27:5, since Moses didn't know how to respond to Zelophehad's daughters' plea to receive their father's inheritance, he *brought forward their case before YHVH*. Rabbi Yose explains that Moses did so because he didn't know whether Zelophehad's sefirotic sin had been purged by his being stoned to death (see Numbers 15:35–36). Only such purging would allow for his hereditary

holding to be granted to his daughters. Once God mentioned Zelophehad's name, Moses realized that his sin had been purged, since God mentions the names of only the righteous. See Numbers 27:6–7: *YHVH said to Moses, "Rightly do the daughters of Zelophehad speak. You shall surely give them a hereditary holding among their father's brothers and you shall transfer their father's estate to them."*

19. **There are two Trees…** *Tif'eret* is the Tree of Life, while *Shekhinah* is the Tree of Knowledge. This second tree is also known as the Tree of Death, because when Adam and Eve ate of its fruit, death ensued. When *Shekhinah* is separated from the other *sefirot*, She becomes vulnerable to demonic forces and can transmit death and destruction; so She is then called the Tree of Death.

Whoever switches the two sefirotic trees, elevating *Shekhinah* above *Tif'eret*, commits a fatal sin and loses his share in the world that is coming.

The verse in Proverbs appears in the famous story about four sages who entered the *pardes* (the mystical "orchard"). One of them, Ben Zoma (or according to other sources, Ben Azzai), "glimpsed and was stricken [perhaps mentally]. Of him is written *If you find honey, eat just enough, lest you have your fill and vomit it up."* See *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:3; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; BT *Ḥagigah* 14b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; *Midrash Mishlei* 25:16.

On the Tree of Death, see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 5, p. 24; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:375–76. Cf. Genesis 2:17: *But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die*. According to *Miqdash Melekh*, this paragraph represents the continuation of Rabbi Ḥiyya's remarks (above at note 17).

20. **The Ark and Torah exist as one…** The Ark symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who receives or contains *Tif'eret*, the core of the lower *sefirot*, symbolized by Torah. The "deficient"

spelling ארן (*aron*), without a ו (*vav*), indicates that by Herself *Shekhinah* lacks *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the letter *vav*.

Actually, according to the Masoretic text, in the phrase *the Ark of the Covenant* the word ארון (*aron*), *the Ark of*, is always spelled with a *vav*. As for the phrase *the Ark of the Testimony*, the "defective" spelling ארן (*aron*), *the Ark of*, appears three times, whereas the full spelling ארון (*aron*), *the Ark of*, appears nine times. When the expression *the Ark* appears on its own (not in a construct state), it is always spelled defectively—הארן (*ha-aron*)—in the Torah itself, whereas throughout the rest of the Bible it is always spelled in full: הארון (*ha-aron*). See *Midrash Ḥaserot vi-Yterot*, 73, 88 (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:262, 268); *Minḥat Shai* on Exodus 25:22.

21. **אהרן (*Aharon*), Aaron, is always the right arm...** Aaron symbolizes *Ḥesed*, the divine right arm, except for one verse relating to the census. Here Aaron symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret*. This special instance is marked by an unusual feature in the Masoretic text: all the letters of the word ואהרן (*ve-aharon*), *and Aaron*, are dotted above—implying that here אהרן (*aharon*), Aaron, functions differently, as ארן (*aron*), Ark, symbolizing *Shekhinah*.

Actually, the dotted word ואהרן (*ve-aharon*), *and Aaron*, appears in Numbers 3:39, which reads in full: *All the reckonings of the Levites that Moses and Aaron reckoned according to the word of YHVH by their clans, every male from a month old and up—twenty-two thousand*. Here, the *Zohar* quotes instead Numbers 1:44, which reads in full: *These are the reckonings that Moses and Aaron and the chieftains of Israel made, twelve men, one man for each father's house they were*.

On the ten instances of dotted letters in the Torah, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 69; *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:9; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:5; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 87a; *Soferim* 6:3; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34; B, 37; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander), 37; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 4; *Midrash Mishlei*

26:24; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 3:13; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 33:4; *Zohar* 1:171b; 2:124b. On the dotted *he* of *reḥoqah*, see also M *Pesaḥim* 9:2; *Tosefta Pesaḥim* 8:3; JT *Pesaḥim* 9:2, 36d. On the significance of dotted letters, see Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 43–46.

22. **Moses grasped the Tree of Life…** He attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, symbolized by this Tree. However, the scouts brought back fruit from another Tree, corresponding to the Tree of Knowledge, symbolizing *Shekhinah*. Their act resembles the sin of Adam, who ate from the Tree of Knowledge, whereas according to the *Zohar* he should have united this Tree (*Shekhinah*) with the Tree of Life (*Tif'eret*). Through his tragic error, Adam separated *Shekhinah* from Her partner and brought death into the world, just as the scouts brought death upon the Israelites. See above, note 17.

On the clause "for the Tree of Life is desirable to all," see the description of the Tree of Knowledge in Genesis 3:6: *The woman saw that the tree was good for eating and attractive to the eyes and the tree was desirable to look at* [or: *to contemplate*; *to bring wisdom*], *and she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave to her man with her, and he ate*. Cf. the description of all the trees in the Garden in Genesis 2:9: *YHVH Elohim caused to sprout from the soil every tree desirable to look at and good for food, and the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil*.

On Moses wanting to know whether the Tree of Life was located in the Land, see above at note 16. On the fruit brought back by the scouts, see Numbers 13:23, 27. On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, note 17. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 16.

23. **for your own sake** To find out which Tree is in the Land. See above, notes 14, 16.

24. **Caleb and Phinehas…** The two spies sent later by Joshua to scout out Jericho are not named in the Bible (Joshua 2:1), but according to midrashic tradition they were

Caleb and Phinehas. See *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1.

25. ***He restores his master's soul…*** One of *Shekhinah*'s many names is *soul*. In this verse, according to Rabbi Yehudah, She appears as the *soul* of *Tif'eret*, Her *master*. By fulfilling their mission, Joshua's two faithful spies restored *Shekhinah* to Her people.

26. **Those whom Moses sent…** Of the twelve tribal chieftains sent by Moses to scout out the land of Canaan, only Caleb and Joshua returned with a favorable report, insisting that God would enable the Israelites to prevail against the Canaanites. The other ten came back terrified and convinced the people that they could not succeed in conquering the land. The people wept and then complained bitterly to Moses and Aaron: *If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this desert! Why is YHVH bringing us to this land to fall by the sword? … Isn't it better for us to go back to Egypt?* (Numbers 14:2–3). When Joshua and Caleb insisted that God would ensure victory, the angry people threatened to kill them. Then God decreed that all the Israelites above the age of twenty would indeed die in the desert, except for the two virtuous scouts.

The phrase "weeping for later generations" derives from a midrashic interpretation of the verse describing how the people wept when they heard the negative report of the scouts: *The whole community lifted their voice and put it forth, and the people wept on that night* (Numbers 14:1). See BT *Ta'anit* 29a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "That night was the night of the ninth of Ab. The blessed Holy One said to them, 'You have wept for nothing [since I will help to conquer the land of Canaan], but I designate for you a weeping for generations.'" The ninth of Ab is traditionally considered the date on which both the First and Second Temples were later destroyed.

See JT *Ta'anit* 4:6, 68d; *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 1:1; BT *Sotah* 35a, *Sanhedrin* 104b; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 27, p.

145; 28, pp. 154–55; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 21; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:20. Cf. Psalms 106:24–27.

27. **I see by your face…** For similar statements, see *Zohar* 1:96b, 127b (*MhN*); 3:6a, 298a; *ZḤ* 72a (*ShS*), 89c (*MhN, Rut*).

28. ***For the fate of human beings…*** This verse undermines traditional belief by implying that chance determines everything, and that there is no divine providence, reward and punishment, or immortality of the soul. If Solomon's words are supposedly profound, how can this verse be explained when it seems to promote heretical notions?

It was precisely verses such as this one that caused the rabbinic sages to question the sanctity or full canonical status of Ecclesiastes, or to consider withdrawing it from public use because "they found within it words tending toward heresy."

See M *Eduyyot* 5:3, *Yadayim* 3:5; *Tosefta Yadayim* 2:14; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 28:1; BT *Shabbat* 30b, *Megillah* 7a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:1; 24:14; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:3; 11:9; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 18, 90b; *Midrash Mishlei* 25:1. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 30a; *Zohar* 1:195a, 196b, 223a–b; 2:29a, 39a, 59a, 145a; 3:64a–b, 155b–156a, 177b–178a, 182a–b. For a close parallel to this *Zohar* passage, see Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 123–25; Bar-Asher, "Sama'el u-Nqevato," 561–64.

The book of Ecclesiastes is traditionally ascribed to the wise King Solomon. (Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:1, 12.) The full verse here reads: *For* מקרה (*miqreh*), *the fate of, human beings and the fate of the beast is a single fate. As one dies, so dies the other, and all have a single spirit, and the human's advantage over the beast is nothing, for all is* הבל (*havel*), *mere breath*.

The term מקרה (*miqreh*), means "what happens, what befalls someone, incident, accident, chance, fate (though not something preordained)." In Ecclesiastes, *miqreh* refers

to the universal fate of death. The sense of “chance” figures significantly below. (Cf. 1 Samuel 6:9; Ruth 2:3.)

The phrase *mere breath* renders הבל (*havel*), which means “breath, vapor,” and (especially in Ecclesiastes) “futility; that which is meaningless, trivial, empty, and fleeting.” Instead of *is a single fate*, the *Zohar* here reads *is all a single fate*. For a mystical reinterpretation of *the human’s advantage over the beast is nothing*, see Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 20 (24); Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, 69.

29. **a canteen…** זפירא (*Zafira*), a Zoharic neologism, apparently a metathesis of Arabic *ẓarifa*, “container, receptacle” (a cognate of *ẓarf*, “container”). Perhaps, *zafira* also reflects the Arabic root *sfr*, “to travel.” See *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 177, s.v. *zafira*; *Derekh Emet*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 349–50.

30. **waterskin…** קטפורא (*Qatpora*), another Zoharic neologism, which embraces several meanings, including “waterskin, wineskin.” See *Zohar* 1:33a, 72a, 197b; 2:31a; *Derekh Emet*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 349–50. Cf. Psalms 119:83.

31. **If it’s through your son…** Rabbi Ḥizkiyah offers mild praise for the fact that the anonymous Jew has picked up a bit of Torah from his boy, but he concludes that he and Rabbi Yeisa will have to find someone far more learned in order to resolve the problematical verse in Ecclesiastes.

32. **sometimes in a poor man’s undergarment…** Wisdom may be found in unexpected places and people.

See [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 20: “Do not scorn any person, for several pearls may be found in a poor man’s undergarment.” Cf. *Zohar* 2:95a: “That donkey-driver, is he here? For sometimes in those empty ones, you may discover bells of gold!” See also BT *Nedarim* 81a; *Shemot Rabbah* 23:10; and M *Avot* 4:1, in the name of Ben Zoma: “Who is wise? One who learns from every person.”

The word “undergarment” renders אפרקסית (*apparaqsit*), based on the rabbinic terms אפרקסות (*apparaqsut*) or אפיקרסין

(*appiqarsin*), which derive either from Greek *epikarsion*, "transversely woven garment," or (via metathesis) from *episarkion*, "underwear, shirt." See *Tosefta Berakhot* 2:15; JT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4c; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:7; BT *Berakhot* 23b, 24b; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *appiqarsiyan*; Rashi on BT *Berakhot* 23b, s.v. *be-apparaqsuteih*; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Avel* 8:3; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Lieberman, "Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics," 2; idem, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 1:23.

33. **told him about it** About how problematical it sounded. See above, note 28.

34. **So how?** That is, "So how are we distinguished?" Or, "So how, then, do you interpret the verse?"

35. **He wasn't saying this on his own…** Whereas most of Ecclesiastes conveys Solomon's own words, here he was quoting fools. Cf. Ibn Ezra, ad loc.

As mentioned above (note 28), the term מקרה (*miqreh*), *fate*, can also mean "chance." Instead of *is a single fate*, the *Zohar* here reads *is all a single fate*.

36. **he called them *beast*…** As implied by the preceding verse in Ecclesiastes, which reads in full: *I said in my heart* על דברת (*al divrat*), *in regard to, human beings, "God has sifted them out* [or: *has tested them*] *to show that they themselves are nothing but beasts."* Here, the traveling Jew construes *al divrat* as *concerning the speech of* (foolish *human beings*).

37. **so that they won't join with other people…** Whom they might corrupt with their foolishness.

38. **What is their opinion?…** That is, "What, according to Solomon, was the opinion of the fools?" See above, note 35.

Here the anonymous Jew is polemicizing against the heretical view that chance determines everything, and that there is no divine providence, reward and punishment, or immortality of the soul. Such radical views were current in

thirteenth-century Spain. See above, note 28; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:423.

The curse תיפח רוחיה (*tippaḥ ruḥeih*), "May his spirit expire!" (appearing often in rabbinic literature) is equivalent to "May he breathe his last!" "May he drop dead!" See *Zohar* 1:238b; 3:105a, 106a, 149b, 152a, 199b; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 101–2.

On the concluding sentence, see M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: "Whoever shows no concern for the glory of his Maker, better for him if he had never come into the world!"

39. ***If the human spirit rises upward…*** After death, the soul of a righteous person returns to her divine source. See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:21.

The anonymous Jew associates the verbal participle in the clause העולה היא למעלה (*ha-olah hi le-ma'lah*), *if she rises upward*, with the noun עולה (*olah*), "ascent offering." He is alluding to the tradition that the archangel Michael offers up the souls of the righteous to God.

See *Araqim*, in *Otsar Midrashim*, ed. Eisenstein, 1:70a (cf. *Otsar Midrashim*, 1:104a; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5:63); *Tosafot, Menaḥot* 110a, s.v. *u-Mikhael*; *Zohar* 1:80a (*ST*), 81a (*ST*); 2:37b, 211b, 247a (*Heikh*); 3:33a (*RM*), 53a; *ZḤ* 21a (*MhN*), 24b (*MhN*), 25a (*MhN*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 292 (137); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 114–16. Cf. *Zohar* 2:119b (*RM*), 213b, 229a; 3:29b (*RM*). See also BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, *Zevaḥim* 62a, *Menaḥot* 110a; *Midrash Tehillim* 134:1.

The phrase "Bundle of Life" derives from 1 Samuel 25:29 (recording Abigail's blessing to David), which reads: *If a person rises to pursue you, to seek your life, the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God, and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*. In the *Zohar, Shekhinah* is often called Bundle of Life. See 1:65b, 209a, 224b; 2:11a, 36b, 59a, 142b; 3:24b, 70b, 71b, 90b, 92a, 139a (*IR*), 159b, 182b;

Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 123; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 60–61 (75–76).

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Command Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the teaching of* העולה (*ha-olah*), *the ascent offering. It* [or: *She*] *is the very ascent offering* [or: *It is that which ascends*] *upon its hearth on the altar all night till morning, and the fire of the altar shall keep burning on it."* The ascent offering was totally consumed by fire. On the phrase "a pure עולה (*olah*)," cf. Leviticus 1:10; 23:12; Numbers 6:14.

40. **to that certain place…** Namely, to Hell, the destination of *the beast's spirit*, that is, the soul of a fool or a wicked person—as opposed to "the (righteous) human being." See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:21.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *The breath* [or: *life-breath, spirit, soul*] *of a human is the lamp of YHVH, searching all the inward chambers* [literally: *the chambers of the belly*]. The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *and all have a single spirit*. Here the *Zohar* reads: *they have a single spirit*. For the full verse, see above at note 28.

41. **in another place he spoke similarly** Of a single fate awaiting all.

42. ***This is evil…*** The full verse reads: *This is evil* [or: *the evil*] *in all that is done under the sun: that a single fate awaits all, and also the heart of human beings is full of evil, and there is mad revelry* [or: *madness*] *in their hearts while they live, and afterward—off to the dead!*

The anonymous Jew interprets this to mean that the fool who thinks *that a single fate awaits all* is considered *evil*. Any such person cannot abide with God and forfeits his share in the world that is coming, so of him Solomon says *This* [one] *is evil*.

In rabbinic literature, the word *evil* in Psalm 5 is associated specifically with sexual sin. See BT *Niddah* 13b, in the name of Rabbi Ammi: "Whoever brings himself into the grip of [lustful] fantasy is barred from the domain of the

blessed Holy One. Here is written [*What he did*] *was evil in the eyes of* YHVH (Genesis 38:10), and there is written *You are not a God delighting in wickedness; evil cannot abide with You* (Psalms 5:5).” Rabbi Ammi bases his teaching on an analogy between the word *evil* in the verse from Genesis (referring to Onan’s sin of wasting seed) and the same word in Psalm 5.

The version of this *Zohar* passage as it appears here follows numerous manuscripts and the early printed editions (Mantua and Cremona). The text in *Or Yaqar* preserves a different reading, apparently introduced by a scribal editor and based on the teaching of Rabbi Ammi in *Niddah* (or its frequent parallels in the *Zohar*): “זה רע (*Zeh ra*), *This is evil*, surely! What is meant by *zeh ra, this is evil*? This is one who spills זרעא (*zar’a*), seed, fruitlessly—corrupting his ways, for such a person does not abide with the blessed Holy One and has no share in the world that is coming….” This reading appears in later printed editions of the *Zohar*.

On the verse in Psalms, see also *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 18, p. 331; *Zohar* 1:52a–b, 56b–57a, 62a, 188a, 219b; 2:103a, 193b, 214b; 3:90a, 105a.

43. ***That a single fate awaits all…*** Such is the view of the evil fool. For the full verse, see the beginning of the preceding note.

44. **Those wicked faithless ones…** As previously, the traveling Jew indicates that Solomon is quoting the wicked fools, not speaking for himself. See above, note 35; Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes 9:4.

The foolish view is that one who “chooses that world”—that is, one who lives his life virtuously in order to attain the world that is coming—is wasting his time, because no such world exists: “it is not life.” Such fools believe that *all the living have something to trust in*—i.e., that life here and now is all that matters.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *For he who* יחבר (*yeḥubbar*), *is joined, to all the living has something to trust in, for surely a live dog is better than a dead lion*. The word יְחֻבַּר (*yeḥubbar*), *is joined*, represents the Masoretic text as it is read (known as *qere*, "[the] read"). The alternative version—יִבָּחֵר (*yibbaḥer*), *is chosen*—represents the text as it is written (known as *ketiv*, "[the] written"). Here, the anonymous Jew selects the *ketiv*, which he construes as יִבָּחַר (*yivḥar*), *chooses*. He reads the following words as *All the living have something to trust in*.

45. **Although you may find...** These verses are quoted elsewhere to support different interpretations, but the traveling Jew insists that his explanation matches the original intent of King Solomon.

46. **Because I am a messenger...** Who must complete his mission successfully. Otherwise, the failed messenger is considered a fool and could even be liable to death—just as ten of the twelve scouts were condemned to die (along with the other adult Israelites) because they failed in their mission by bringing back a negative report about prospects of conquering the Promised Land.

On the fate of the scouts (called "spies" in rabbinic literature, and so also in the *Zohar*), see Numbers 14:37; M *Sanhedrin* 10:3. Midrashic literature applies the verse in Proverbs to the scouts. See *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 2, 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:2, 5.

47. **Rabbi Ḥaggai ...** A Palestinian *amora* who was probably born in Babylon.

On his (initial or apparent) lack of knowledge, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 68a; *Zohar* 1:89a (*ST*); *ZḤ* 25c (*MhN*); *Nitsotsei Zohar*. On not showing off one's learning, see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 23b, and Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *be-massekhet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 4a: "Teach your tongue to say, 'I don't know,' lest you be led to falsehood."

On Rabbi Ḥaggai's learning from his son, see above at note 31.

48. **Eliezer, the servant of Abraham…** According to rabbinic tradition, Abraham's servant (or steward), Eliezer, was a Canaanite, and the verse from Hosea is applied to him.

Canaan was the son of Ham and grandson of Noah; after Ham *saw his father's nakedness* (Genesis 9:22), Noah cursed Ham's descendant(s): *Cursed be Canaan, the lowliest slave shall he be to his brothers* (ibid., 25). Yet although Canaan had been cursed, Eliezer escaped this fate by serving Abraham loyally; so when Laban (Rebekah's brother) greeted Eliezer on his mission to find a wife for Isaac, he said, *Come in, blessed of YHVH*.

Abraham's servant Eliezer is mentioned by name only once in the Bible (Genesis 15:2), though traditionally he is identified with the servant who finds a wife for Isaac (in Genesis 24). The verse in Hosea reads: כנען (*Kena'an*), *A merchant, in whose hands are false balances; he loves to cheat*. In midrashic sources, this reference to *kena'an* is understood as *A Canaanite* and is applied to Eliezer, Abraham's (supposedly) Canaanite servant. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 59:9; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16; *Zohar* 3:103a. On Eliezer as escaping Canaan's curse, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 60:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 17:5; *Zohar* 3:103a.

49. ***Moses sent them…*** All of the scouts were virtuous chieftains of their respective tribes, but ten of them conspired selfishly to produce a negative report about the prospects of conquering the land of Canaan. By following their own bad advice, they doomed themselves along with all the Israelites who were convinced by their report.

On the initial positive nature of the scouts, see *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:5. The full verse reads: *Moses sent them from the Desert of Paran by YHVH's word, all of them personages* [or: *men*], *heads of the Children of Israel they were*.

50. ***These are the names…*** According to midrashic tradition, the names of the scouts indicated their character; and concerning ten of them, "their names were ugly and their deeds were ugly." Moses discerned the character of these ten scouts, so he knew that they would bring back a negative report. He prayed that Joshua would be able to withstand their pressure and speak favorably.

Moses attained the rung of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun), and he infused Joshua with the radiance of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon). Caleb, seeking similar protection, separated from the other scouts and came alone to Hebron, the burial site of the patriarchs, who symbolize the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. There he prostrated himself on their graves, begging them to pray that he be delivered from the influence of the other scouts.

See BT *Sotah* 34b: "Rava said, '… Caleb separated from the plan of the spies and went and prostrated himself upon the graves of the patriarchs, saying to them, "My fathers, plead for mercy on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the plan of the spies!" As for Joshua, Moses had already pleaded for mercy on his behalf, as is said: *Moses called* הושע (*Hoshe'a*), *Hosea, the son of Nun* יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), *Joshua* (Numbers 13:16)—יה יושיעך (*Yah yoshi'akha*), May *Yah* save you, from the spies' plan.'" See *Zohar* 2:16b (*MhN*), 31a; below, note 59.

According to rabbinic tradition, "The face of Moses was like the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon." See *Sifrei*, Numbers 140; BT *Bava Batra* 75a.

On the negative nature of the names of the ten scouts, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 71:3; BT *Sotah* 34b; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 2, *Shelaḥ* 2, 6, *Ha'azinu* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 1, *Shelaḥ* 10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:10; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 13:4–16.

51. ***There were Ahiman…*** The verse reads: *They went up through the Negeb and came to Hebron, and there were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai*, ילידי הענק (*yelidei ha-anaq*),

descendants of the Anakites [or: *offspring of the giant*]. The noun *anaq* means "necklace" (related to its Arabic cognate, which means "neck"), and the phrase *yelidei ha-anaq* may be an epithet meaning "long-necked ones" or "giants," and/or an ethnic designation. See Numbers 13:28; Deuteronomy 1:28; 2:10–11, 21; 9:2; Joshua 14:12.

52. ***Moses called*** הושע **(*Hoshe'a*), *Hosea*...** Rabbi Yitsḥak wonders why Scripture implies here that יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), *Joshua*, was originally named הושע (*Hoshe'a*), *Hosea*. After all, in previous biblical passages he is always called *Yehoshu'a*. He explains that here Moses wasn't naming Joshua but rather praying that God would save Joshua from the scouts' scheme.

On the earlier references to the name יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), *Joshua*, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 24:13; Naḥmanides on Exodus 17:9. On the name יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), *Joshua*, as implying יה יושיעך (*Yah yoshi'akha*), "May *Yah* save you, from them," see BT *Sotah* 34b (quoted above, note 50); *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:9; 18:21.

Exodus 17:9 reads: *Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, battle against Amalek."* Exodus 17:13 reads in full: *Joshua disabled Amalek and his people by the edge of the sword*. Exodus 33:11 reads: *He* [Moses] *returned to the camp, and his attendant, Joshua son of Nun,* נער (*na'ar*), *a deputy* [or: *attendant, servant, lad, youth*] *did not depart from within the Tent*.

53. **Since he sent him to enter there...** Since Moses was sending Joshua to enter the Promised Land (the abode of *Shekhinah*), Joshua had to be complete, linked with *Shekhinah*. Previously, Joshua was associated with the chief angel, Metatron, who is known as נער (*na'ar*), *a youth*. Now, Moses elevated him to the rung of *Shekhinah* by adding the divine letter י (*yod*) to his name—the initial letter of both יה (*Yah*) and יהוה (*YHVH*). Although his full name, יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*),

does appear in earlier biblical passages, there it simply refers to his future status, which was achieved only here.

On Metatron as *na'ar* (youth, lad, [heavenly] servant), see above, note 12. On the significance of the letter י (*yod*) in יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), see JT *Sanhedrin* 2:4, 20c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:2; BT *Sanhedrin* 107a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 6, *Qoraḥ* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:9; 18:21; *Shemot Rabbah* 6:1. On the earlier instances of the name *Yehoshu'a* as alluding to Joshua's future name, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 24:13. Cf. Naḥmanides on Exodus 17:6; *Nitsotsei Orot*.

54. **היש בה עץ אם אין (*Ha-yesh bah ets im ayin*)...** The full verse reads: *"What is the land like, is it fat or lean?* היש בה עץ (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Are there trees in it* [literally: *Is there a tree in it*], *or not? Exert yourselves* [or: *Summon your strength*; *Be courageous*] *and take some of the fruit of the land." And the season was the season of the first ripe grapes*.

55. **Now, didn't Moses know...** See above, note 16.

56. ***There was a man in the land of* עוץ (*uts*), *Uz*...** By asking היש בה עץ (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Is there a tree?* Moses was implying: "Is Job still alive there?"—since עץ (*ets*), *tree*, suggests עוץ (*uts*), *Uz*, the land in which Job lived. If Job (or another such worthy person) were living in Canaan, his virtue could protect the land from Israelite conquest.

See BT *Bava Batra* 15a: "Rava said, 'Job lived in the days of the spies. Here is written *There was a man in the land of* עוץ (*uts*), *Uz, named Job* (Job 1:1), and there is written היש בה עץ (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Is there a tree?* (Numbers 13:20).' Is there really a parallel? Here, uts (*Uz*); and there, *ets* (*a tree*). Well, this is what Moses was saying to Israel: 'Is that man there whose years are as long as the years of a tree, and who protects his generation like a tree?'" (The scouts are referred to as "spies" in rabbinic literature.)

On Job's longevity, see Job 42:16–17. On the passage in *Bava Batra*, see *Pitron Torah*, 154; Rashi on Numbers

13:20; *Zohar* 3:236a (*RM*). Cf. *Pitron Torah*, 158; *Midrash Aggadah, Midrash ha-Gadol*, and Rashi on Numbers 14:9; Rashi on BT *Sotah* 35a, s.v. *shekheiv iyyov*.

57. **He offered them a hint of wisdom...** Moses was really asking *Is there a tree in it or* אין (*ayin*), *Nothingness?* In other words, he wanted the scouts to determine which divine quality was conducting and influencing the land of Canaan: was it *Ze'eir Anpin* (the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Yesod*) or *Arikh Anpin* (the highest sefirotic configuration, also known as the Holy Ancient One and corresponding to *Keter*)? Whereas *Ze'eir Anpin* is symbolized by the Tree of Life (*a tree*), *Arikh Anpin* is called *Ayin* (Nothingness or No-thingness) because it is beyond comprehension.

Rabbi Shim'on links Moses' question with the one posed by the Israelites soon after crossing the Red Sea. The simple sense of that earlier question expresses Israel's doubt: *Is YHVH in our midst or* אין (*ayin*), *not?* But here, too, Rabbi Shim'on interprets *ayin* as *nothingness*, referring to *Arikh Anpin*. Thus Israel sought to determine which configuration was manifested in their midst: was it *Ze'eir Anpin* (signified by the name *YHVH*) or *Arikh Anpin* (*Ayin*)?

Moses contrasts his question to the scouts with the earlier question posed by the Israelites. The Israelites wanted to determine the answer in relation to the manna that had just been provided to them, which they were digesting: *Is YHVH* בקרבנו (*be-qirbenu*), *in our entrails, or* אין (*ayin*), *Nothingness?* In other words, did the manna originate from *Ze'eir Anpin* (*YHVH*) or from *Arikh Anpin* (*Ayin*)? Now, the scouts are being asked to determine which divine quality is manifested in the Promised Land.

In referring to the digestion of the manna, Rabbi Shim'on may be alluding to the midrashic notion the manna was "absorbed by the 248 limbs" of the body, so that none of it was eliminated. See BT *Yoma* 75b; *Midrash Tehillim* 78:3. On the relation between manna and wisdom, see

Zohar 2:62b (Vol. 4, pp. 337–38, n. 493; pp. 338–39, n. 497).

The full verse in Exodus reads: *He called the name of the place* מסה ומריבה (*Massah u-Mrivah*), *Testing-and-Quarreling, for the quarrel of the Children of Israel, and for their testing YHVH, saying, "Is YHVH* בקרבנו (*be-qirbenu*), *in our midst* [or: *among us*], *or* אין (*ayin*), *not*?" Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *be-qirbenu* as *in our entrails*.

On the reading *Is YHVH in our midst or Ayin?* see *Zohar* 2:64b; 3:129a (*IR*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 93b; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 17:7; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*. On the concept of *Ayin*, see Matt, *"Ayin."* For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 54.

On the relation of the manna to both *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze'eir Anpin*, see *Zohar* 2:61b (Vol. 4, pp. 331–32, nn. 470, 472). The term אריך אנפין (*Arikh Anpin*) means "slow to anger, long-suffering, forbearing, patient," taking a long time for one's nostrils to flare (deriving from Exodus 34:6). See Ibn Ezra (short), ad loc. In Kabbalah this term is applied to the highest sefirotic configuration, corresponding to *Keter* and characterized by pure compassion.

The next configuration of *sefirot*, encompassing *Ḥokhmah* through *Yesod*, is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to *Arikh Anpin*, this configuration is described as זעיר אנפין (*Ze'eir Anpin*), meaning "short-tempered, irascible, impatient," taking a short time for one's nostrils to flare (deriving from Proverbs 14:17). On *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze'eir Anpin*, see below, pp. 773–74, n. 21.

58. ***And the days...*** Scripture specifies *the days* in order to allude to the six cosmic days of Creation—namely the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*. This sextet was joined to *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the Tree of Knowledge, from which Adam ate the forbidden fruit.

According to a midrashic tradition (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Ila'i), the Tree of Knowledge was

actually a grapevine. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1; *Ester Rabbah* 5:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 42, 175a. See also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 323; *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:5; BT *Berakhot* 40a, *Sanhedrin* 70a–b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 23; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:2, 8; *Zohar* 1:36a–b, 192a; 2:144a, 267b (*Heikh*); 3:127a.

On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, notes 17, 22. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 54.

59. **ויבא (*Va-yavo*), *And he came…*** Why do the verse's verbs switch from the plural (*they went up*) to the singular (*he came*)? Because Caleb separated from the other scouts and came alone to Hebron, the burial site of the patriarchs. There he prostrated himself on their graves, begging them to pray that he be delivered from the influence of the other scouts, who conspired to issue a negative report on the Land.

See BT *Sotah* 34b: "*They went up through the Negeb* ויבא (*va-yavo*), *and he came, to Hebron* (Numbers 13:22). The verse should read ויבאו (*va-yavo'u*), *and they came*. Rava said, 'This teaches that Caleb separated from the plan of the spies and went and prostrated himself upon the graves of the patriarchs, saying to them, "My fathers, plead for mercy on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the plan of the spies!" As for Joshua, Moses had already pleaded for mercy on his behalf, as is said: *Moses called* הושע (*Hoshe'a*), *Hosea, the son of Nun* יהושע (*Yehoshu'a*), *Joshua* (Numbers 13:16)—יה יושיעך (*Yah yoshi'akha*), May *Yah* save you, from the spies' plan." (The scouts are referred to as "spies" in rabbinic literature, and so also in the *Zohar*.)

See Rashi and Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:22; *Zohar* 2:16b (*MhN*), 31a; above, note 50. On the scouts' conspiracy, see above at note 49.

60. **The one who was more distinguished…** Rabbi Yitsḥak interprets the singular form ויבא (*va-yavo*), *and he came, to Hebron* as referring not to Caleb but rather to

Shekhinah, “who was more distinguished than all” of the tribal chieftains. She entered Caleb, empowering him to enter the Cave of Machpelah, in Hebron, where the patriarchs were buried.

See Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:22. On the phrase *offspring of the giant*, see above, note 51.

61. **From whom did Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai issue?…** These *sons of the giant* (or *Anakites*) are associated with the mythical *Nephilim* later in this biblical chapter, when the scouts declare: *There we saw the Nephilim—sons of the giant* [or: *Anakites*] *are descended from the Nephilim—and in our own eyes we were like grasshoppers, and so we must have seemed in their eyes* (Numbers 13:33). See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 22.

The *Nephilim* (fallen angels) appear in the mythological fragment preserved in Genesis 6:1–4: *When humankind began to increase on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful, and they took themselves wives, whomever they chose. YHVH said, “My spirit* [or: *breath*] *shall not abide in the human forever, for he too is flesh* [or: *for he is but flesh*]. *Let his days be a hundred and twenty years.” והנפילים (Ve-ha-Nefilim), The Nephilim* [or: *fallen ones*], *were on earth in those days—and afterward as well—when the sons of God came in to the daughters of humankind, who bore them children. These are אנשי השם הגבורים אשר מעולם (ha-gibborim asher me-olam anshei ha-shem), the mighty ones of old, men of renown*.

Here Rabbi Yitsḥak interprets מעולם (*me-olam*), *of old*, as meaning *of the world*, based on the post-biblical sense of *olam*. This now alludes to the three giants who dominated the land of Canaan, “attending to the world.” He reads the following phrase—אנשי השם (*anshei ha-shem*), *men of renown*—hyperliterally as *men of the name*, referring now to the same giants, whose names were famous.

On the fallen angels (or Uzza and Aza'el), see below, p. 233, n. 3; 1 Enoch 6–11; Jubilees 5; *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiva*, 175–76; BT *Yoma* 67b; *Aggadat Bereshit*, intro, 39; *Midrash Avkir*, 7 (cited in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 44); *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b, 23a (*TZ*), 25a–b (*TZ*), 37a, 37a (Tos), 55a, 58a, 126a, 133b; 2:112b, 178b–179a (*SdTs*), 212b; 3:60b, 76b, 144a (*IR*), 184b, 194a, 207b–208b, 212a–b, 233a–b; *ZḤ* 81a–b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:147–51; Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 175–76, nn. 123–26; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 50–65. Cf. Testament of Solomon 6:1–3.

62. ***They came to Wadi Eshcol…*** The full verse reads: *They came to Wadi* אשכל (*Eshkol*), *Eshcol, and they cut down from there a branch with one* אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster, of grapes—they carried it on a pole held by two—and some pomegranates and some figs*.

63. ***Thus says God,*** **YHVH…** Rabbi Yehudah is apparently associating *the earth and what emerges from it* with the fruit mentioned in the verse from Numbers quoted in the preceding paragraph. The conclusion of the verse—*who gives* נשמה (*neshamah*), *breath, to the people upon it* ורוח (*ve-ruaḥ*), *and spirit, to those who walk thereon*—relates to the discussion below at notes 73–79. On the association between *Eshcol* and Torah, see below, note 95.

On Torah being equivalent to (or outweighing) sacrifices, see BT *Menaḥot* 110a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "What is the meaning of the verse *This is the Torah for the ascent offering, for the grain offering, for the purification offering, and for the guilt offering* (Leviticus 7:37)? Whoever engages in Torah is considered to have offered an ascent offering, a grain offering, a purification offering, and a guilt offering."

See *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 57; *Zohar* 1:100a (*MhN*), 191a–b; 3:32a, 35a, 80b, 164a. Cf. *Ta'anit* 27b; *Megillah* 31b.

64. **Since the blessed Holy One knew…** Rabbi Yehudah wonders: Since God knew that humans would inevitably sin and deserve death, why did He create them? The fact that humans would die was obviously known to God, since that fact is demonstrated repeatedly in the Torah (which existed long before Creation). No matter how a person spends his life—engaging in Torah or neglecting it—he will die. All humans share this fate, although in the afterlife ("that world") a distinction is made between the worthy and the unworthy.

On Rabbi Yehudah's question, see *Zohar* 1:235a. According to rabbinic tradition, Torah antedated the world by two thousand years. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:2; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:24; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Midrash Shemu'el* 5:2; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Yitro* 16; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:12; *Bahir* 4 (5); *Zohar* 1:2b; 2:49a, 84b, 99a, 161a; 3:91b, 128a (*IR*). On the link between this theme and the verse *When a person dies in a tent*, see *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 4.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All have a single fate—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the pure and the impure, he who offers sacrifice and he who does not offer sacrifice; as for the good, so for the sinner, he who vows and he who fears the vow*.

65. **Why do you trouble…** Rabbi Yehudah's question touches on the most profound issues: God's original intent in Creation, and the paradox of divine foreknowledge and human free will.

See the rhetorical question posed by Isaiah to King Hezekiah in BT *Berakhot* 10a: "What business do you have with the secrets of the Compassionate One?" See the passage from Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) as quoted in BT *Ḥagigah* 13a: "What is too wondrous for you, do not seek; what is concealed from you, do not explore. What you have been permitted, contemplate; you have no business with

secret things." Cf. Ecclesiasticus 3:21–22; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:2.

According to its simple sense, the verse in Ecclesiastes refers to making rash vows. On this verse, see *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:3; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; BT *Ḥagigah* 15a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4 (all pertaining to Elisha son of Avuyah); *Zohar* 2:87a; 3:79a, 105b, 128a (*IR*); *ZḤ* 89d (*MhN, Rut*).

66. **If so, surely the entire Torah…** If it is improper to explore secrets, then how is it permitted to engage in Torah, which is filled with secrets and represents God's Name?

On Torah as God's Name, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37; *Zohar* 1:160a; 2:55b, 60a–b, 87a, 90b, 124a, 161b; 3:13b, 19a, 21a, 35b–36a, 61a, 71a–73a, 76a, 80b, 89b, 91b, 98b, 118a, 176a, 265b, 298b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341–42; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 37–44; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1085–86; Idel, "Tefisat ha-Torah." Cf. Naḥmanides, introduction to Commentary on the Torah, 6–7; idem, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:167–68.

67. **The entire Torah is concealed and revealed…** Its simple, explicit sense hides deeper meaning. Similarly, God's Name is concealed and revealed. For example, the name יהוה (*YHVH*) is "concealed" in the sense that it represents a more hidden *sefirah* (*Tif'eret*), and in the sense that it is not pronounced as it is written, but rather as the more "revealed" name אדני (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which refers to a more revealed *sefirah* (*Shekhinah*).

On both Torah and God's Name as being concealed and revealed, see *Zohar* 2:230b; 3:71b, 75a, 98b. On God's name as being concealed and revealed, see also *Zohar* 1:39b (*Heikh*); 2:178a (*SdTs*); 3:65b, 71b–72b, 146b, 289a (*IZ*); cf. 3:11a. On the Torah as being revealed and concealed, see also *Zohar* 1:234b; 2:95a, 98b–99b; 3:72a–

73a, 152a; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, 50–65; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1077–89.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *The hidden things are for YHVH our God, and the revealed are for us and for our children forever to fulfill all the words of this teaching*.

68. **except for the Holy Lamp…** Only Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai is permitted to expound the secrets openly.

בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*)—or בוסינא קדישא (*Bosina Qaddisha*)—"the Holy Lamp," is the honorific title of Rabbi Shim'on in the *Zohar*. Cf. 2 Samuel 21:17; *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:4; BT *Ketubbot* 17a, where Rabbi Abbahu is called: בוצינא דנהורא (*Botsina di-Nhora*), "Lamp of Light"; and *Berakhot* 28b, where Rabban Yoḥanan son of Zakkai is called נר ישראל (*Ner Yisra'el*), "Lamp of Israel."

According to rabbinic sources, Rabbi Shim'on claimed that he could protect the world until the Messiah arrives. (See *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15. Cf. BT *Sukkah* 45b.) According to the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shim'on's generation is the greatest until the Messiah will appear. See *Zohar* 2:9a, 147a; 3:58a, 105b, 132b (*IR*), 206a, 236b, 241b. On Rabbi Shim'on's messianic status in the *Zohar*, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1–84.

On Rabbi Shim'on alone being permitted to reveal secrets, see *Zohar* 3:179b. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; *Zohar* 1:225a; 2:149a, 156a; 3:79a, 287a; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 62–104; Vol. 8, p. 191, n. 398.

69. **But come and see!…** Although the deepest secrets must be safeguarded, Rabbi Abba proceeds to respond to Rabbi Yehudah's profound question regarding human mortality. See above at note 64.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *God created the human in His image; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them*.

70. **The blessed Holy One has three worlds…** The divine essence is concealed within three realms. The first

such realm is the highest *sefirah, Keter*.

The notion that *Keter* is unfathomed even by the other *sefirot* parallels the statement in the Gnostic *Gospel of Truth* (22:27–29), according to which the aeons (divine emanations) below *Nous* (Intellect) are unaware of the hidden divinity: "It was quite amazing that they were in the Father without knowing Him." Cf. *Zohar* 1:30a, 49a; 2:239a; 3:129b (*IR*).

On this passage describing the three worlds, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:440–41. On various Zoharic depictions of the worlds, see ibid. 2:555–58.

71. **Second world...** Encompassing the *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* through *Shekhinah*. The last *sefirah* is also called *Tsedeq* (Righteousness), through whose gates one can enter to encounter *YHVH* (which can refer to *Ze'eir Anpin*, namely *Ḥokhmah* through *Yesod*).

See *Zohar* 3:95a, 175b; cf. 1:103a–b. The two verses in Psalms read in full: *Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and praise Yah. This is the gate* ליהוה (*la-YHVH*), *of YHVH* [or: *to YHVH*]; *the righteous will enter it*.

72. **Third world...** The world of the Divine Chariot and the angels, which is separated from the divine realm of unity and is characterized by duality. God's presence (which fills the world) is certainly there, yet the angels cannot constantly see or fully perceive Him, so in a sense He is not there.

In the context in Ezekiel, the declaration *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His* [or: *its*] *place!* is spoken by the angels. According to a rabbinic interpretation, this demonstrates that even the angels cannot determine the exact location of God (or of the Divine Glory). See BT *Ḥagigah* 13b: "Look at what is written: *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His place*!—implying that no one knows His place!" The angels' question, "Where is the place of His glory?" appears in the *musaf* service for Sabbath and festivals, introducing the line from Ezekiel.

See *Sifra, Vayiqra, dibbura di-ndavah* 2:12, 4a–b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4; *Zohar* 1:103a; 2:100b; 3:209a. Cf. *Bahir* 90 (131): *"Blessed be the glory of YHVH from its place!* What is *the glory of YHVH?* A parable. To what can this be compared? To a king who had a matron in his chamber, with whom all his soldiers delighted. She had children who came each day to see the king and praise him. They asked him, 'Where is our mother?' He replied, 'You cannot see her now.' They said, 'May she be blessed wherever she is!'"

The word פירודא (*peiruda*), "separation," applied to the angels, reflects the medieval philosophical term שכלים נפרדים (*sekhalim niphradim*), "separate intelligences," which the philosophers identified with angels. In the philosophical context, "separate" refers to separation from matter, whereas here "separation" refers to duality and the separation from divine oneness. See the following note. On the statement "the blessed Holy One exists there and does not," cf. *Zohar* 3:128a–b (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 327, n. 22.

73. **Similarly, *In the image of God*...** Corresponding to the three divine worlds are three worlds inhabited or visited by the human being. The first of these is the earthly world, in which the human exists but only fleetingly; his fellow mortals cannot see him for long,

The expression עלמא דפירודא (*alma de-pheiruda*), "world of separation," reflects the philosophical notion of the realm of השכלים הנפרדים (*ha-sekhalim ha-niphradim*), "the separate intelligences." As mentioned in the preceding note, in the philosophical context "separate" refers to separation from matter, whereas here "separation" refers to duality and the separation from divine oneness. In this paragraph, "the World of Separation" refers specifically to the realm of mundane existence.

See *Zohar* 1:22a (*TZ*), 29b, 34b, 155a–b, 158a; 2:24b, 35a, 234a; Scholem, *Le-Ḥeqer Qabbalat R. Yitsḥaq ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen*, 62–65; idem, *Kabbalah*, 117–18; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:556–57.

74. **Second world…** The earthly Garden of Eden, where the virtuous *ruaḥ* (spirit) dwells after death. In the middle of this Garden is an immense column rising to the celestial Garden of Eden ("another, higher world").

On this column, see *Zohar* 1:39a–b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 219a; 2:95b, 130b, 184b, 210a, 211a; 3:185b; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 149–50; [idem?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 270–84, 298–99 (132–35, 139–40); Idel, *Ascensions on High*, 101–42. Cf. *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:28).

75. **Third world…** The celestial Garden of Eden, in which the virtuous *neshamah* (soul) dwells after death, experiencing indescribable bliss.

On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*]."

76. **All corresponds…** These three worlds correspond to "the supernal original pattern," namely the three divine worlds described previously (at notes 70–72). Just as God inhabits those three worlds, the human being should inhabit his own three worlds, thereby fulfilling the purpose of existence: resembling the divine paradigm.

In this and the following paragraphs, Rabbi Abba concludes his response to the profound questions posed by Rabbi Yehudah (above at note 64): "Since the blessed Holy One knew that the human being would eventually sin before Him and be condemned to death, why did He create him?… Why does the blessed Holy One want a human in this world?" On the purpose of embodied human existence, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 46–47; Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 148.

77. ***You are children of YHVH your God…*** Since all Jews are children of God, they inherit a divine soul, which does not perish when the person dies, but endures forever.

See *Zohar* 1:245b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 299. For other interpretations of this paragraph, see *Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Deuteronomy, forbidding certain mourning rites, reads: *You are children of YHVH your God! You shall not gash yourselves nor shall you make a bald spot between your eyes for the dead*.

78. **If a human did not sin...** Then he would experience no pain or trauma when his physical life ended; rather, his spirit would move easily into other realms. But due to human sin, death is bitter, as the *ruaḥ* (spirit)—Aramaic *ruḥa*—is stripped of its bodily garment. It is bathed and cleansed in the River of Fire, and then enters the terrestrial Garden of Eden.

Before entering a human body, each soul exists in the Garden of Eden, where it is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body it will inhabit on earth. As the soul leaves the Garden, it removes the ethereal body and prepares to put on an earthly body. Eventually, when the soul returns to the Garden upon death, it regains the ethereal body.

On the ethereal body, see *Sidrei de-Shimmusha Rabba*, 124–25; Naḥmanides on Genesis 49:33; *Zohar* 1:7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 90b–91a, 115b (*MhN*), 131a, 217b, 219a, 220a, 224a–b, 227a–b, 233b; 2:11a, 13a–b, 96b, 141b, 150a, 156b–157a, 161b; 3:13a–b, 43a–b, 61b, 70b, 104a–b, 167b–168a, 171b; *ZḤ* 10b–c (*MhN*), 68d–69a (*ShS*), 90b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390; [idem?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 275–76 (133); Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 215–45; idem, *Kabbalah*, 158–59; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 251–73; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:770–73. Cf. Rashi on BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, s.v. *ve-ruḥot u-nshamot*; Vol. 8, p. 170, n. 328.

The River of Fire (mentioned in the first paragraph of this note) is formed from the sweat of the angelic beings carrying the Throne. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:1; *Eikhah*

Rabbah 3:8; BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4. Cf. Vol. 5, p. 319, n. 361.

On purification in the River of Fire, see *Zohar* 1:201a, 217b; 2:211b, 247a (*Heikh*); 3:205a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 373–74; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 54–55, 68–70; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 60 (74–75). Cf. below, p. 317, n. 64.

The clause "If a human did not sin" renders לא חב אדם אלמלא (*ilmale la ḥav adam*), "If Adam did not sin." Since the rest of the paragraph applies more generally, I have chosen the translation "a human" rather than "Adam." On the question of whether Adam would have lived forever if he hadn't sinned, see Genesis 2:17; *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 6; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:29; *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 12; *Shemot Rabbah* 4:4; *Zohar* 2:55a; *ZḤ* 18c (*MhN*); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

79. **There is its abode continually...** The virtuous spirit dwells in the terrestrial Garden of Eden, but on new moons and Sabbaths it ascends to the celestial Garden of Eden, where it joins the *neshamah* (soul)—Aramaic *nishmeta*.

On the crowns of the righteous in the afterlife, see BT *Berakhot* 17a: "A pearl in the mouth of Rav: 'In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking or procreation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition; rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*.'"

On souls of the righteous being crowned (or ascending) on new moons, festivals, and Sabbaths, see *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*), 134b (*MhN*); 2:97b, 136a–b, 141b–142a, 156b–157a, 212a; 3:70b, 144b–145a (*IR*), 163a, 164b, 168a, 173a, 213b; *ZḤ* 18b (*MhN*), 82d–83a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 30 (36). Cf. *Pesiqta* Rabbati, add., 198a; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5:43; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 294 (138). The verse from Isaiah figures in a number of

these passages; see also *Zohar* 1:41a (*Heikh*), 62b (*Tos*), 115b–116a (*MhN*); 3:182b; *ZḤ* 18b (*MhN*).

80. **Why *from new moon to new moon?...*** Because the moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is renewed at each new moon, when She is illumined by *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun).

Similarly, each Sabbath is a celebration of their union. Sabbath eve symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whereas Sabbath day symbolizes *Tif'eret*. The concluding sentence apparently means that both phrases (*from new moon to new moon* and *from Sabbath to Sabbath*) allude to the divine union.

81. **except for the wicked...** Unless they turn back to God in *teshuvah*. On the image of being "cut off," see, e.g., Numbers 15:31: *For he has spurned the word of YHVH and His commandment he has violated. That soul shall surely be cut off; her iniquity* [or: *guilt*] *is upon her*.

82. **From this portion...** Describing the mission of the scouts. The land of Canaan (the Promised Land) represents the future realm of bliss awaiting those who devote themselves to the study of Torah and serving God.

On the expression "world of... yearning," see *Zohar* 1:123b (Tos), 124b (*MhN*); 2:115a (*RM*); 3:106b, 132a (*IR*), 288a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 64a (*ShS*); *TZ* 32, 76b.

83. ***Go up this way into the Negeb...*** Through Torah, symbolized by *the Negeb*, a person can gain a glimpse of the future world and its rewards.

On the connection between *the Negeb* and Torah, see Rashi on Judges 1:15: "ארץ הנגב (*Erets ha-Negev*), *The Negeb land*—a person whose house is מנוגב (*menuggav*), bare [or devoid; literally: dried, wiped], of all good [material] things, containing only Torah." See idem on Joshua 15:19. Both comments by Rashi are based on BT *Temurah* 16a.

The context in Numbers (13:17–20) reads: *Moses sent them to scout the land of Canaan, and he said to them, "Go up this way into* [or: *through*] *the Negeb, and go up into the hill country. Observe the land*: *what is it like? And the*

people inhabiting it, are they strong or slack, are they few or many? And what is the land they inhabit, is it good or bad? And what are the cities in which they dwell, are they in open settlements or in fortresses? And what is the land like, is it fat or lean? Are there trees [literally: *Is there a tree*] *in it or not? Exert yourselves and take some of the fruit of the land.” And the season was the season of the first ripe grapes*.

84. ***Observe the land…*** For the full verse in Numbers, see the preceding note. “Through her” means “through Torah.”

85. **Through her…** Through studying Torah. The term “impulse” refers to the evil impulse.

86. ***And what is the land like…*** For the full verse, see above, note 83. Again, “that world” refers to the future world awaiting the righteous.

87. ***Is there a tree in it…*** In its simple sense, the verse begins: הִישׁ בה עץ (*Ha-yesh bah ets*), *Are there trees in it?* Reading it hyperliterally—*Is there a tree in it?*—Rabbi Shim’on interprets *a tree* as referring to the Tree of Life, namely *Ze’eir Anpin* (whose core is *Tif’eret*). The term Bundle of Life alludes to *Shekhinah*.

On the reading *Is there a tree in it or not?* see above, notes 16, 57. On *Ze’eir Anpin*, see above, note 57. On “the Bundle of Life,” see above, note 39.

88. ***They went up into the Negeb…*** The name נגב (*Negev*) means literally “arid land” and refers to the southern part of Judea (between Beer-sheba and the Sinai Peninsula).

Those who proceed in Torah lazily and listlessly cannot imagine its reward, and they conclude that by spending their time on Torah they sacrifice financial gain.

The concluding quotation (from *Targum Onqelos* on the verse in Genesis) demonstrates that the root נגב (*ngv*) means “to be dry.” See Rashi and David Kimḥi on Joshua 15:19;

Rashi on BT *Ta'anit* 8b, s.v. *ba-negev*; Ibn Ezra on Psalms 126:4. Cf. above, note 83.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *They went up* בנגב (*va-negev*), *through* [literally: *into*] *the Negeb, and came* [literally: *and he came*] *to Hebron, and there were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai,* בני הענק (*benei ha-anaq*), *descendants of the Anakites* [or: *offspring of the giant*]. *And Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt*.

89. **Afterward,** ויבא עד חברון **(*va-yavo ad ḥevron*), *and he came to Hebron*...** The devoted individual who perseveres in Torah unites with her.

The phrase "reading and rereading" renders קארי ושאני (*qarei ve-shanei*), "reading and repeating." In rabbinic literature, the Hebrew equivalent—קורא ושונה (*qore ve-shoneh*)—often means "reading Bible and Mishnah." On the hyperliteral reading *and he came to Hebron*, see above, notes 59–60.

90. ***There were Ahiman*...** These three giants represent the huge challenges of studying and applying Torah: determining what is pure and impure, permitted and forbidden.

"Divisions" renders פליגן (*peligan*), which may imply פלוגאתא (*pelugata*), "conflicting opinions." For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 88.

91. ***Offspring of the giant*...** Such divisions within the realm of Torah stem from *Gevurah*, which is characterized by boundaries, distinctions, and duality.

For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 88. On the phrase *offspring of the giant*, see above, note 51.

92. ***Hebron was built seven years*...** The verse reads: *Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt*. See above, note 88.

These *seven years* symbolize the seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*, whose core is *Tif'eret*, often identified as Written Torah. Seven multiplied by ten equals seventy, alluding to the seventy branches or faces of Torah. The phrase "seventy

ענפין (*anfin*), branches," is a play on "seventy אנפין (*anpin*), faces," although here the *Zohar* employs the Hebrew word פנים (*panim*) for "faces."

חברון (*Ḥevron*), Hebron, symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is often referred to as Oral Torah, so one who delves into Oral Torah is appropriately called חבר (*ḥaver*), "companion."

On the seventy faces (or facets) of Torah, see *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:16, where Torah is compared to wine: "Just as יין (*yayin*), wine, is numerically equivalent to seventy, so Torah assumes seventy faces." See *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:354); Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§77, 388; Ibn Ezra, introduction to Commentary on the Torah (short); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 74–75, 79; *Zohar* 1:26a (*TZ*), 47b, 54a; 2:83b (Vol. 4, pp. 462–63, n. 343); 3:202a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 366–67. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 88b; *Zohar* 1:4b. On the seventy branches, see *Zohar* 2:83b, 89a, 92b (*Piq*), 133b.

The number seventy appears in the context of revelation in BT *Shabbat* 88b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Every utterance emerging from the mouth of Power branched into seventy languages [of humanity]." See *Sefer Ḥanokh* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:116).

The sense of *ḥaver* (companion) as one who delves into Torah (or Oral Torah) betrays medieval usage. In rabbinic literature, *ḥaver* refers to one who observes specific restrictions, mostly concerning food (tithing and purity). See, e.g., M *Demai* 2:3; 6:6, 9, 12; Scholem.

93. **Torah corresponding to Torah…** Written Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, whereas Oral Torah symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is also represented by Hebron. Oral Torah (or *Shekhinah*) issues from Written Torah (or *Tif'eret*), and She is also pictured as Lower Wisdom, the daughter of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). The verse in Proverbs now implies that *Tif'eret* (the son of *Ḥokhmah*) calls *Shekhinah* *my sister*.

Shekhinah (symbolized by Hebron) *was built seven years* —that is, She was fashioned from the seven *sefirot* from *Binah*

to *Yesod*, or She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself. Therefore, She is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, meaning "Daughter of Seven."

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister," and call Understanding a friend*. See JT *Sotah* 1:9, 17b; BT *Sotah* 11a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:22; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 20; *Zohar* 1:81b, 111b–112a, 140b; 2:12a; 3:296a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 35a; 80d (*MhN*, *Rut*).

94. **Before *Zoan in Egypt*—as is said...** Zoan (known as Tanis in Hellenistic sources) is located on a branch of the Nile and became the capital of Egypt in about 1000 B.C.E.

Shekhinah is known both as Hebron and *the wisdom of Solomon*. The historical fact that Hebron preceded the Egyptian capital, Zoan, implies that *Shekhinah* surpasses *the wisdom of Egypt* (along with all foreign varieties of wisdom).

On *Shekhinah* as *the wisdom of Solomon*, see *Bahir*, 3 (3), 44 (65), 51 (77); *Zohar* 1:150a, 223a–b, 238a, 248b; 3:61a, 74b, 176b, 297a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 88.

95. ***They came to Wadi* אשכול (*Eshkol*), *Eshcol*...** The word *eshkol* means "cluster," alluding to *haggadah* (or *aggadah*)—homiletic interpretations of Torah, which derive (or "hang") from faith in the divine nature of Torah.

On the association between אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster*, and *haggadah*, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:14, in the name of Rabbi Berekhiah: "אשכל (*Eshkol*), *A cluster of, henna* (Song of Songs 1:14). What is mean by אשכל (*eshkol*), *a cluster?* שהכל בו איש (*Ish she-ha-kol bo*), A person in whom is everything: Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, *toseftot*, and *aggadot*." Cf. BT *Sotah* 47b, *Temurah* 15b.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *They came to Wadi* אשכל (*Eshkol*), *Eshcol, and they cut down from there a branch with one* אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster, of grapes—they carried it on a pole held by two—and some pomegranates and some figs*.

96. ***with one* אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster*...** The single cluster of grapes represents "chapter headings and initial words" of the secret teachings of Torah. No more than this is revealed to the initiate.

The single cluster also represents the unified nature of Torah and its secrets, all of which derive from a single source and whose teachings do not conflict with one another.

On the term "chapter headings" in the context of mystical study, see BT *Ḥagigah* 13a, discussing Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot: "'The Chariot may not [be expounded even] before one person alone [unless he is a sage who understands on his own].' Rabbi Ḥiyya taught, 'But chapter headings may be transmitted to him.'" In this context, "chapter headings" apparently refers to the opening words of each section or subject within the full Account of the Chariot.

On delighting in the words of Torah, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:4: "Ben Azzai was sitting and expounding, and fire was blazing around him. They [his disciples] came and told Rabbi Akiva.... He went to him and said, 'Perhaps you are engaged in the chambers of the Chariot!' He replied, 'No, I am stringing words of Torah to the Prophets, and words of the Prophets to the Writings—and the words of Torah are as joyous as on the day they were given from Sinai.'"

See JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:10; *Rut Rabbah* 6:4; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:8. On the words being "blessed," cf. Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 40.

97. **Those who are not scions of faith...** Nonbelievers (corresponding to the ten scouts who lacked faith) fail to perceive the unity of Torah, claiming that its teachings contradict one another. Or, they divide the Written Torah (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) from the Oral Torah (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).

The clause in Numbers—*they carried it* במוט בשנים (*ba-mot bi-shnayim*), *on a pole by two*—now implies that such nonbelievers "stumble" in Torah, splitting it *bi-shnayim, in two*. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 95.

98. ***And some* רמונים (*rimmonim*), *pomegranates…*** These nonbelievers misinterpret Torah, reading (or reacting to) it heretically, in accord with the demonic Other Side.

Rabbi Shim'on plays with רמונים (*rimmonim*), *pomegranates*, and מינאי (*mina'ei*), "heretics." He may be associating תאנים (*te'enim*), *figs*, with תואנה (*to'anah*), "pretext, excuse," alluding to heretical interpretations of Torah based on the pretext of false readings. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 95.

99. ***They returned from scouting the land…*** Having failing to understand Torah properly, the skeptics return to their evil ways, claiming that study provides no material benefits in this world, and that it is impossible to attain "that world," the future realm of bliss.

100. ***They recounted to him…*** Those who abandon the study of Torah insist that they really tried to glimpse the reward of the future world. They acknowledge how fine it is—"but who can ever attain it?"

The context in Numbers (13:27–28) reads: *They recounted to him and said, "We came to the land you sent us to, and it is truly flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. But mighty* [or: *fierce*] *are the people inhabiting the land, and the cities are fortified and huge, and also the offspring of the giant we saw there!"* On the phrase *the offspring of the giant*, see above, note 51.

101. ***But mighty are the people…*** Those who devote themselves to Torah must be so strongly dedicated that they disregard material benefits. By not expending their resources on anything beyond the bare essentials, they accumulate enough wealth that they can study endlessly, without wasting time and energy on material pursuits.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Proverbs demonstrates the link between might and wealth. It reads in full: *Imploringly speaks the poor person, and the rich one answers* עזות (*azzot*), *harshly* [literally: *mightily*].

102. ***And the cities are fortified and huge…*** Dedicated scholars must have adequate resources. Yet they must also be physically strong—as mighty as a giant or a lion—in order to endure the strain of intense study and of making fine distinctions.

On the effects of prolonged study, see BT *Sanhedrin* 26b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanan: "Why is [Torah] called תושיה (*tushiyyah*), Prudence? Because it מתשת (*matteshet*), saps, a person's strength." See *Midrash Tehillim* 7:3; *Kallah Rabbati* 5:2. On *tushiyyah* (prudence) in the context of "wisdom" (often identified with Torah), see Proverbs 2:7; 8:14; Job 11:6.

On being "mighty as a lion" in serving God, see M *Avot* 5:20, in the name of Yehudah son of Teima: "Be bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fleet as a gazelle, and mighty as a lion, to do the will of your Father in Heaven." See *Zohar* 1:190b.

The phrase "houses filled with all good" derives from Deuteronomy 6:11, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 100.

103. ***Amalek inhabits the Negeb land…*** The Amalekites had attacked the Israelites soon after they crossed the Red Sea. (See Exodus 17:8–16 and Deuteronomy 25:17–18.) In the *Zohar*, Amalek is an embodiment of the demonic serpent, and here represents the evil impulse. Even if a person intends to devote himself to Torah and thereby merit the future world of bliss, the evil impulse constantly tries to thwart him. Similarly, other demonic accusers (represented by *the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Amorite*) block his way.

On the demonic nature of Amalek, see *Zohar* 2:65b–66a, 194b–195a; *ZḤ* 50b. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 131; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6:24, n. 141. On Amalek as representing the evil impulse, cf. *Zohar* 2:235b–236a; Vol. 6, p. 360, n. 290.

104. **With these words…** The scouts dissuaded the Israelites from entering the Promised Land—which here implies "from engaging in Torah, whereby a person merits the promised future world of bliss."

The verse in Numbers 32 reads: *They disheartened the Children of Israel from entering the land that YHVH had given them*. The full verse in Numbers 13 reads: *They put forth an evil report to the Children of Israel of the land that they had scouted, saying, "The land we traversed to scout is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are of huge measure."*

105. **What did those scions of faith say?…** The response of Caleb and Joshua demonstrates how a faithful devotee of Torah counters the nonbelievers. Despite the difficulties, God will assist those who delve into Torah with all their heart, as long as they also "guard that holy insignia." This means that they must preserve and honor the covenantal sign of circumcision by engaging in sexual relations in holiness.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified*. Here, the term *righteous* alludes to *Yesod*, the divine phallus, who is called Righteous One. Those who imitate *Yesod* by practicing sexual purity *will inherit the land forever*—that is, they will attain the future realm of bliss, symbolized by the Promised Land.

Yesod is known as Righteous One, based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). Although the simple sense of the verse is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*, it is understood midrashically as *The righteous*

one is the foundation of the world. See BT *Yoma* 38b, *Ḥagigah* 12b; *Bahir* 71 (102); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 34.

The statement "surely He desires from us only the heart" reflects the wording in BT *Sanhedrin* 106b: "The blessed Holy One desires the heart," or its alternative version: "The Compassionate One desires the heart." See Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *revuta*; Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 31:18; idem on Ecclesiastes 5:1; idem, *Yesod Mora* 7; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot), pars. 530, 590, 1013; *Zohar* 2:162b; 3:281b (*RM*).

The full verse in Numbers reads: *If YHVH delights in us, He will bring us to this land and give it to us, a land that is flowing with milk and honey*.

106. ***Only do not rebel against YHVH…*** As opposed to what the nonbelievers claimed (above at notes 101–2), the pursuit of Torah does not require wealth.

Torah is conceived as God's Name, so rebelling against Torah is tantamount to rebelling against God. See above, note 66. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Only do not rebel against YHVH! And you, do not fear the people of the land, for they are our prey* [literally: *bread*]: *their shade* [or: *shadow, protection*] *has abandoned* [or: *turned away from*] *them and YHVH is with us. Do not fear them!*

107. **if a broken body engages in Torah…** See BT *Eruvin* 54a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "If a person feels pain in his head, let him engage in Torah…. If he feels pain in his throat, let him engage in Torah…. If he feels pain in his entrails, let him engage in Torah, as is said: *It will be healing for your navel* (Proverbs 3:8). If he feels pain in his bones, let him engage in Torah, as is said: *and moistening for your bones* (ibid.). If he feels pain throughout his body, let him engage in Torah, as is said: *and healing to all his flesh* (ibid. 4:22)."

The demonic or threatening forces who had thwarted the person's progress (as described above at note 103) now

pave his way. Cf. *Zohar* 3:52b.

The full verse in Proverbs 3 reads: *There will be* [or: *It will be; Let it be*] *healing for your navel* [or: *your flesh*] *and moistening for your bones*. The verse in Proverbs 4 (describing a father's words of wisdom) reads in full: *For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh*.

108. ***For they are our bread…*** The verse reads: *And you, do not fear the people of the land, for they are our prey* [literally: *bread*]. Rabbi Shim'on adopts the literal sense—*our bread*—which now implies that the threatening forces themselves sustain those who delve into Torah. Similarly, the ravens (an impure species) provided food for Elijah after he fled from King Ahab and went into hiding. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 106.

109. ***Their shadow has abandoned them…*** The verse reads: *Their shade* [or: *shadow, protection*] *has abandoned them and YHVH is with us. Do not fear them!* This *shadow* signifies the power of harsh Judgment, which abandons the threatening forces, so that they now become helpful and supportive.

110. **they are… called His brothers and companions…** The full verse in Psalm 122 reads: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, "Peace be within you."* This verse is addressed by the Psalmist to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*.

See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:15; JT *Berakhot* 9:1, 13b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:8; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 5; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:9; 52:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 4:3; 15:4; *Zohar* 2:55b, 122a; 3:7b, 22a, 59b, 77b.

111. ***They came to Wadi Eshcol…*** The full verse reads: *They came to Wadi* אשכל (*Eshkol*), *Eshcol, and they cut down from there a branch with one* אשכול (*eshkol*), *cluster, of*

grapes—they carried it on a pole held by two—and some pomegranates and some figs.

112. **They cut down that *cluster*…** Ten of the scouts cut it down, but it was so heavy that they couldn't lift it or even move it. The phrase *by two* alludes specifically to Caleb and Joshua, the only two who were virtuous among all twelve scouts. See Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:23.

113. **Why did they need a *branch?*…** The scouts were told to *take some of the fruit of the land* (Numbers 13:20), so all they really needed was the cluster, not the branch.

The wording במוט (*va-mot*), *on the pole*, with the definite article, indicates this pole's prominence: "that well-known one, the one they cut down." On the distinction between *branch* and *pole*, see Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:23. Cf. *Midrash Aggadah* and Rashi on the verse.

114. **From here Caleb and Joshua knew…** When they realized that only they could lift the heavy branch, they realized that they were worthy of entering the Promised Land. The ten other scouts were jealous of their supernatural ability, so they conspired to kill Caleb and Joshua.

115. **They didn't give it to the others…** Rabbi El'azar insists that Caleb and Joshua carried the cluster themselves all the way back to the Israelites' camp, where they then "gave it to them," namely to the ten other scouts.

From his experience here, Joshua concluded that it was best to send only two scouts, which he later did. In its simple sense, the verse in Joshua reads: *Joshua son of Nun sent from Shittim two men as spies secretly, saying, "Go, observe the land and Jericho."*

The two spies sent by Joshua are not named in the Bible, but according to midrashic tradition they were Caleb and Phinehas. See *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1.

Here, however, Rabbi El'azar is apparently referring to an esoteric tradition that identifies these two later spies as Uzza and Aza'el, the two angels who fell from heaven after opposing the creation of Adam and Eve. Their role as spies may be based on the image of angels "spying" on human beings, or on the ambiguous meaning of the term מלאכים (*mal'akhim*), which can mean both "angels" and "messengers."

On Uzza and Aza'el as Joshua's two spies, see *Zohar* 2:178b (*SdTs*); 3:60b, 62b. On the fallen angels, see above, note 61. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1, according to all of which Phinehas (one of Joshua's spies) had an angelic nature.

The idiomatic phrase "making themselves remnants" derives from the Talmud, where it means "to be self-effacing, humble." See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17a–b, *Megillah* 15b, *Sanhedrin* 111b.

116. **When they reached those giants…** The scouts saved themselves by displaying Moses' staff, with which he had performed miracles before Pharaoh, split the Red Sea, and struck the rock to produce water.

Rabbi Yitsḥak demonstrates this through verbal analogy. Since the word זה (*zeh*), *this*, appears both in Moses' directive to the scouts and in God's directive to Moses about the staff, this "proves" that Moses gave them his staff. See Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:17.

On the unique nature of Moses' staff, see M *Avot* 5:6, which lists it as one of the ten things created in the last moments of the week of Creation, on Sabbath eve at twilight.

On the giants, see above, note 51. For the full verse in Numbers 13, see above, note 83. The full verse in Exodus reads: *This staff you shall take in your hand, with which you shall do the signs*.

117. **Moses transmitted to them the tradition of a Holy Name…** According to numerous sources, Moses' staff

was engraved with the Divine Name.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 2:21; 4:20; 14:21; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:8; 11:10; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 87; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, add. 2, 78b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 42; *Midrash Tehillim* 114:9; *Sefer ha-Yashar, Shemot*, 307; *Zohar* 1:6b, 9a; 2:28a, 48a, 60b, 64a; *ZḤ* 30b (*MhN*). Cf. Ibn Ezra (short), Exodus 3:13.

According to the midrashim listed above, the staff was engraved with the name *YHVH*. Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 13:17 records a tradition that God's twelve-letter name was engraved on the staff, since the numerical value of זה (*zeh*), *this*, is twelve. He quotes Exodus 3:15: זה (*Zeh*), *This, is My name forever*. On the twelve-letter name, see below, p. 142, n. 275.

118. **[The giants] were called by three names...** The name נפילים (*Nephilim*), "Fallen Ones," refers to the fallen angels. When they united with human females, their offspring were called ענקים (*Anaqim*), "Giants." Gradually, through intermingling with humans, the descendants lost their heavenly powers and were called רפאים (*Repha'im*), "Slack (or Weak) Ones."

On the fallen angels, see above, note 61. For the term נפילים (*Nephilim*), see Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33. For the term ענקים (*Anaqim*), see Deuteronomy 1:28; 2:10–11, 21; 9:2; Joshua 11:21–22; 14:12, 15. Cf. Numbers 13:22, 28, 33; Joshua 15:13–14; Judges 1:20. For the term רפאים (*Repha'im*), see Genesis 14:5; 15:20; Deuteronomy 2:11, 20; 3:11; Joshua 12:4; 13:12; 17:15.

119. **But look at what is written...** Rabbi Ḥiyya claimed that the *Repha'im* were weaker than their ancestors, but Rabbi Yehudah quotes a verse indicating that they resembled the *Anaqim*.

120. **So it is...** Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that the *Anaqim* and the *Repha'im* shared a great despair on earth, having both derived from angelic and human ancestors ("from both this side and that"). As the *Repha'im* aged, their human halves

weakened and eventually became paralyzed, until, in desperation, they poisoned themselves and died. So another sense of the name *Repha'im* applies to them as well: "Shades of the Dead."

121. **If Israel had entered the Land...** If they had entered Canaan immediately after the scouts' slanderous report, they would have contaminated the Promised Land with the residue of such evil speech, and the whole world would have been doomed.

On the serpent as "artisan of the evil tongue," cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:4, in the name of Rabbi Levi: "He [the serpent] began speaking slander against his Creator, saying, 'He ate of this tree and created the world. And He told you, *"You shall not eat from it"* (Genesis 3:3), so that you would not create other worlds.' For everyone hates his fellow artisan."

On the serpent copulating with Eve, see BT *Yevamot* 103b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust]." The point here, apparently, is that sinfulness—including "the evil tongue" (evil speech)—infected Eve's descendants.

On the scouts' slander of the Land, see Numbers 13:32: *They put forth an evil report to the Children of Israel of the land that they had scouted, saying, "The land we traversed to scout is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are of huge measure."*

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 3:4; *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:1; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13; *Devarim Rabbah* 5:10; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 8, *Shemot* 23, *Tazri'a* 9, *Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 20, *Metsora* 7, *Ḥuqqat* 45; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:9; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:12; *Zohar* 3:52b.

On the passage in *Yevamot*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:1 (per British Library MS 27031, ed. Clark); BT

Shabbat 145b–146a, *Avodah Zarah* 22b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21 (and Luria's nn. 7–8); *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 3:12; *Zohar* 1:36b–37a, 52a–b, 54a–55a, 63b, 70b, 122b, 126a–b, 145b, 228a; 2:94a, 167b–168a, 193b, 231a, 236b; 3:14b, 19b, 24a, 76b, 79a, 87a, 97b, 125a, 143a (*IR*), 189a; *ZḤ* 1d, 8c–9b, 58d, 63c (*ShS*), 83b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 139; Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 38–53; Koren, *Forsaken*, 89–92.

122. **The blessed Holy One forgives everything…** Cf. BT *Arakhin* 15b: "Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Zimra, 'Whoever utters evil speech [literally: the evil tongue] is as if he denies the Root [i.e., God], as is said: *Those who say, "By our tongue we will prevail; our own lips are with us—who is master over us?"* (Psalms 12:5).' … Rabbi Aḥa son of Rabbi Ḥanina said, 'If he has uttered [evil speech], there is no remedy for him, since [King] David, by the Holy Spirit, has already cut him off, as is said: *YHVH will cut off all smooth-talking lips, the tongue that speaks boastfully* (ibid., 4).'"

See JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 9, p. 170; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:12; *Devarim Rabbah* 6:14; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 8; *Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 12:2; 52:2.

The context in Psalms (12:4–5) reads: *YHVH will cut off all smooth-talking lips, the tongue that speaks boastfully, those who say, "By our tongue we will prevail; our own lips are with us—who is master over us?"*

123. **how much was inflicted by that evil tongue…** Once the Israelites were convinced by the slanderous report of the scouts, they were doomed to die in the desert. As for the scouts themselves (except for Caleb and Joshua), they perished right then in a plague (Numbers 14:37).

The reference to the decree of weeping is based on a midrashic interpretation of the verse describing the people's reaction to the scouts' report: *The whole community lifted their voice and put it forth, and the people*

wept on that night (Numbers 14:1). See BT *Ta'anit* 29a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "That night was the night of the ninth of Ab. The blessed Holy One said to them, 'You have wept for nothing [since I will help to conquer the land of Canaan], but I designate for you a weeping for generations.'" The ninth of Ab is traditionally considered the date on which both the First and Second Temples were later destroyed. See above, note 26.

By slandering the Promised Land, the scouts, as it were, slandered God—since *Shekhinah* is associated with the Land and dwells there. She is also pictured as God's Name. God threatened to annihilate the entire people immediately, but Moses assuaged His wrath, and God then decreed that all Israelites above the age of twenty would eventually die in the desert before they could enter Canaan, except for the two virtuous scouts. See Numbers 14:11–35.

124. **ויספרו (*Va-ysapperu*), *They recounted*...** Rabbi Ḥiyya distinguishes between the three similar verbs.

The verb הגיד (*higgid*), "to tell," implies a word of wisdom, as opposed to the root אמר (*'mr*), "to say," which often pertains to normal or profane speech. On the sense of *higgid* as revealing something concealed or mysterious, see Genesis 3:11; 41:25; Judges 14:12, 15–16; 1 Kings 10:3; Job 11:6; Daniel 2:2. On the significance of *higgid*, see *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 2; BT *Shabbat* 87a; *Zohar* 1:86b, 234b, 249a; 2:79b–80a; 3:50b, 292b–293a (*IZ*). On *haggadah* as referring to the allegorical method of interpretation, see *Zohar* 2:99a; *ZḤ* 83a (*MhN, Rut*); Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 55; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1083–85; Talmage, "Ha-Munnah 'Haggadah,'" 271–73.

On the verb אמר (*'mr*), "to say," as implying thought or intention, see, e.g., Genesis 20:11; 21:16; 26:9, 28; 31:31; 1 Samuel 20:4; 1 Kings 8:12; *Zohar* 1:234b; 2:17a (*MhN*), 25b; 3:17b, 147a. On *'mr* as meaning "to command," see, e.g., Jonah 2:11; Psalms 105:31, 34; Job 9:7; Esther 1:17; 9:14; Daniel 1:3; 1 Chronicles 21:17.

The context in Numbers (13:27–28) reads: *They recounted to him and said, "We came to the land you sent us to, and it is truly flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. But mighty* [or: *fierce*] *are the people inhabiting the land, and the cities are fortified and huge, and also the offspring of the giant we saw there!"* On the phrase *the offspring of the giant*, see above, note 51.

125. **באנו (*Banu*), *We came, to the land…*** Rabbi Ḥiyya notes that the verb בא (*bo*) more literally means "to enter." That is, the scouts not only arrived at the border but also crossed it.

126. **Whoever wants to tell a lie…** In order to convince the people of their slanderous lie—that the Land could not be conquered and that it *devours its inhabitants* (Numbers 13:32)—the scouts began with a pleasantly true statement about the Land's fertility: *it is truly flowing with milk and honey*.

See the statement (related to the scouts' report) in BT *Sotah* 35a, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Any evil speech [or: slander] without some truth in the beginning does not endure in the end."

Rabbi Yitsḥak's reference here to "a lie" rather than "evil speech" matches Rashi's paraphrase of the Talmudic passage in his comment on Numbers 13:27: *"Is flowing with milk and honey*—any lie that is not spoken with a little truth in the beginning does not endure in the end."

See *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 17; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:17; *Zohar* 1:2b; 2:215b, 264a (*Heikh*). For the full text of Numbers 13:27–28, see above, note 124. For the full text of Numbers 13:32, see above, note 121.

127. **Rather, they said…** According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, the statement *and it is truly flowing with milk and honey* does not reflect the view of the scouts; rather, they are quoting Moses, who was always praising the Land. The following clause represents their opposing view: *This is its*

fruit—which they said disdainfully as they plucked off a tiny cluster of grapes (perhaps shriveled) and displayed it to the people. For the full verse, see above, note 124.

128. ***But mighty are the people dwelling in the land…*** Rabbi Ḥiyya is focusing on the wording היושב בארץ (*ha-yoshev baarets*), *dwelling in* [or: *inhabiting*] *the land*. Even those *dwelling* in the cities are mighty warriors.

129. **The harshest of all…** By mentioning Amalek, the spies intended to frighten the Israelites, who had been mercilessly attacked by that nation soon after crossing the Red Sea.

See *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 18; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:18; Rashi on Numbers 13:29; *Zohar* 3:103a.

On the memory of being bitten by a snake, see the saying quoted by Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi in *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:1: "One who has been bitten by a snake is frightened by a rope." Cf. *Zohar* 2:45a: "One who has been bitten by a dog trembles from his bark."

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land; and the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Amorite inhabit the hill country; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and by the Jordan*.

130. **The one who wages war against all…** Not only against vulnerable humans but against God Himself. When Amalek attacked Israel, above in the sefirotic realm Judgment was empowered to overwhelm Compassion, threatening the divine balance. Furthermore, according to rabbinic tradition, the Amalekites mutilated some of the Israelites by cutting off the covenantal sign of circumcision (or the phallus) and throwing it mockingly toward heaven. See Vol. 4, pp. 357–58, nn. 556, 558. Cf. Exodus 17:16: *For hand upon Yah's throne: War for YHVH against Amalek from generation to generation*.

Amalek, who attacks everyone, inhabited the Negeb, which was the gateway to the land of Canaan—as indicated

by Moses' directive: *Go up this way through the Negeb, and go up into the hill country* (Numbers 13:17).

When the people heard this, they wept—dooming their descendants to weep annually forever, since according to a midrashic tradition that night was the ninth of Ab, on which both the First and Second Temples were later destroyed. See above, notes 26, 123.

131. **They conspired…** The subject is the ten scouts.

132. ***the people*, precisely…** The definite article implies "the most dangerous people," namely Amalek, who the scouts assume can defeat even God. The scouts' statement thus defames the blessed Holy One. Rabbi Yose interprets *Amalek inhabits the Negeb land* as identifying who *the people* is.

On Amalek as attacking or threatening God, see above, note 130. On the scouts' claim that the inhabitants of Canaan can overpower God, see BT *Sotah* 35a: "*But the men who had gone up with him* [i.e., with Caleb] *said, 'We cannot* [*mount an attack against the people, for they are stronger* ממנו (*mi-mennu*), *than we*'] (Numbers 13:31). Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa said, 'A grave statement did the spies utter at that moment: *for they are stronger mi-mennu*. Do not read מִמֶּנּוּ *mi-menu*, *than we*, but rather מִמֵּנּוּ *mi-mennu*, *than He*. As it were, even the Master of the house cannot remove His utensils from there [i.e., even God, who owns the land of Canaan (and the whole world), cannot remove its inhabitants].'"

See JT *Ta'anit* 4:6, 68b; BT *Menaḥot* 53b, *Arakhin* 15a; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:11; Rashi on Numbers 13:31. In the standard (Tiberian) Masoretic tradition, the word *mi-mennu* can mean either *than we* or *than he*, whereas the Babylonian scribal tradition distinguished between those two forms. See *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *ba'al* (1); *Tosafot, Arakhin* 15b, s.v. *al tiqrei*; Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 1:9; *She'elot u-Tshuvot ha-Rashba ha-Meyuḥasot la-Ramban*,

232; *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 13:31; Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §103m, n. 1.

133. **Thereby they caused all this…** The scouts' slanderous report had devastating consequences, and God would have immediately wiped out the entire people of Israel, had not Moses assuaged His wrath.

See Numbers 14:11–35; above, note 123. The full verse in Psalms reads: *He said that He would annihilate them—had not Moses, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to turn back His wrath from destroying them*. The divine threat to *annihilate them* and Moses' valiant intervention *to turn back His wrath* relate specifically to the incident of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:9–14), which is referred to earlier in this psalm (vv. 19–20). Here, however, Rabbi Yose applies the verse to the incident of the scouts, which is referred to in the following verses of the psalm (24–27).

134. ***Now, please, let YHVH's power be great…*** The context in Numbers (14:17–19) reads: *"Now, please, let my Lord's power be great, as You have spoken, saying, 'YHVH! Slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*] *and abounding in kindness, removing iniquity and transgression; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons, to the third and fourth generations.' Forgive, please, the iniquity of this people through Your great kindness, and as You have borne with this people from Egypt until now."*

135. **the blessed Holy One… is named for them…** As in the title *God of Israel*, which appears frequently, e.g., Genesis 33:20. On God "glorying" in Israel, see Isaiah 49:3: *You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory*.

The clause "for one is linked with the other" means that Israel is linked with Torah. Cf. Vol. 7, pp. 490–91, n. 431, referring to the supposed Zoharic formula "The blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel are one."

The phrase "is its sustenance" means "is the world's sustenance." On the world being created for the sake of

Israel, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 3, 10; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 3, 10b; 4, 14a; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:357); *Shemot Rabbah* 48:2; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Rashi, and Naḥmanides on Genesis 1:1; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 356–57; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 1:1, n. 77. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:4. On Israel sustaining the world, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 28:14; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 356–57. Cf. BT *Ta'anit* 3b, *Avodah Zarah* 10b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 5, p. 104; *Midrash Tehillim* 21:6; *Ester Rabbah* 7:12; *Zohar* 2:5b (*MhN*); 3:221b.

136. **He designed him according to the supernal precious pattern…** In the divine image, embodying the various aspects of the *sefirot*.

On the centrality of the heart, see JT *Terumot* 8:11, 46b; *Midrash Mishlei* 1:1; *Zohar* 3:221b, 232b. On the heart and the brain, see Vol. 5, p. 393, n. 585. The words "power" and "potency" render תוקפא (*tuqpa*), which in the *Zohar* also occasionally signifies "bosom, breast, chest." See below, pp. 423–24, n. 418.

"Members" renders שייפי (*shaiphei*)—singular, שייפא (*shaipha*)—a frequent Zoharic neologism that may be based playfully on the Talmudic line (BT *Sotah* 7b): על איבריה לשפא (*al eivreih la-shappa*), "His arm [or: limb] entered the casket." Or, the Zoharic sense of *shaipha* may derive from BT *Ḥullin* 42b: "This joint of the thighbone דשף (*de-shaph*), that slipped [i.e., was dislocated], from its place [i.e., out of its socket]." Note also the expression in Job 33:21: ושפו עצמותיו (*Ve-shuppu atsmotav*), *And his bones are rubbed away*. See below, p. 120, n. 203.

137. **the blessed Holy One arranged the world…** The heart of the world is located in the Holy of Holies, while the seventy nations represent the limbs of the world's body. The heart is linked with the divine mind. Cf. Judah Halevi's depiction of Israel and the nations as respectively the heart

and the limbs of the body. See his *Kuzari* 2:35–44; *Zohar* 3:221b.

Technically, not every section of the Temple listed here "surrounds" the next one. Rather, each subsequent location is more central, vital, and holy.

See *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 10: "The land of Israel sits in the center of the world, Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel, the Temple in the center of Jerusalem, the Sanctuary in the center of the Temple, the Ark in the center of the Sanctuary; and in front of the Ark, the Foundation Stone—from which the world was founded."

See BT *Yoma* 54b, *Sanhedrin* 37a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qedoshim* 10; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:2; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25; *Zohar* 1:78a, 84b, 226a; 2:157a, 184b, 193a; 3:65b–66a, 221b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 346; *TZ* 21, 49b, 50b. Cf. Ezekiel 5:5; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 16.

On sitting in the Temple Court, see BT *Yoma* 25a: "No one may sit in the Temple Court except kings of the House of David." See *Zohar* 1:130a. The term "purging cover" renders כפרת (*kapporet*), whose precise meaning is unclear. In the Torah it refers to a slab of pure gold, placed atop the ark. Atop each end of this gold cover stood the figure of a cherub, made of hammered gold. The two cherubim faced each other, with their heads bent slightly downward and their fully outstretched wings turned upward, sheltering the rest of the *kapporet* and the Ark beneath. The divine voice was said to issue from the space above the *kapporet* and between the two cherubim. On Yom Kippur, the *kapporet* was the focal point of the annual purgation rite. See Exodus 25:17–22; Leviticus 16:13–15; Sarna, *Exodus*, 161; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1014.

138. **Here is the heart of the whole world...** Within the Holy of Holies. This cosmic heart is nourished by the divine mind.

In quoting the verse in Exodus, the *Zohar* is playing on מכון (*makhon*), *a firm place*, and מכוון (*mekhuvvan*), "corresponding to, aligned with, directly opposite." Seen in this light, the verse implies that God fashioned an earthly throne (or dwelling) perfectly aligned with the throne on high: *mekhuvvan, that which is aligned with, Your sitting enthroned* [or: *Your dwelling*], *You fashioned, O YHVH*.

See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:17; JT *Berakhot* 4:5, 8c; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:9; 4:3; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 7, *Pequdei* 1–3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 45; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:13.

Cf. *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 1: "There is a Jerusalem above aligned with Jerusalem below. Out of His love for the one below, He fashioned another above…. He has sworn that His presence will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until the earthly Jerusalem is rebuilt."

See BT *Ta'anit* 5a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *lo avo* and *Yerushalayim*; *Midrash Tehillim* 122:4; *Zohar* 1:1b, 231a; 2:224b; 3:15b, 68b, 147b–148a, 262b. Cf. Revelation 21:2; *Targum Yonatan*, Psalms 122:3.

139. **Similarly above…** Corresponding to the ocean surrounding the world, in the divine realm there is the Sea of *Shekhinah*, and above Her the higher Sea of *Binah*.

140. **The River of Fire…** This river is formed from the sweat of the angelic beings carrying the Throne. (See above, note 78.) Here it is described as surrounding many camps of angels.

The "seventy (angelic) aspects" represent the seventy angelic princes assigned respectively to the seventy nations of the world. These surround holier ministering angels, who themselves surround the four archangels (each with his own chariot), who in turn surround *Shekhinah*, pictured as Heavenly Jerusalem.

On the seventy heavenly princes, see Daniel 10:13, 20–21; Septuagint, Deuteronomy 32:8–9; Jubilees 15:31–32; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 11:8, Deuteronomy 32:8–9;

Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer 24; *Tanḥuma, Re'eh* 8; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 9:19; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:204–5, n. 91. On Heavenly Jerusalem, see above, toward the end of note 138.

141. **There, courts within courts...** In the Heavenly Temple are numerous courtyards, in which are seated the souls of the Davidic kings. A heavenly Sanhedrin also presides there, and above them a Divine Court serving *Shekhinah*. From this Court, judgment is delivered to supernal angels, eventually reaching the heavenly Holy of Holies. Here dwells *Shekhinah* (the divine heart), nourished by the brain of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

On *Ze'eir Anpin*, see above, note 57. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

142. **Similarly, high above...** In the highest sefirotic realms, all is nourished by the brain of *Arikh Anpin*. Ultimately, all of the various realms (divine, angelic, and earthly) constitute an immense chain of being.

On *Arikh Anpin*, see above, note 57. On the concluding sentence, see *Zohar* 1:241a; 3:6b, 108a. Cf. 2:125a; 3:291b (*IZ*).

143. **When the concealed Ancient One illumines the Brain...** When *Arikh Anpin* illumines *Ḥokhmah*, the latter illumines *Tif'eret* (or alternatively *Shekhinah*) by way of *Binah* (who is known as *the beauty of YHVH*).

The full verse in Psalms reads: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze* בנעם יהוה (*be-no'am YHVH*), *upon the beauty* [or: *delightfulness, loveliness*] *of YHVH*, ולבקר (*ul-vaqqer*), *and to reflect* [or: *search, seek, inquire, contemplate*], *in His temple*. In the *Zohar, no'am* designates *Binah*. See *Zohar* 1:197b, 218a, 219a; 2:31a–b, 57b, 127a, 170b; 3:79b, 171b, 182b, 267b; *ZḤ* 85b (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 8:4.

The verse in Numbers reads: *Now, please, let my Lord's power be great, as You have spoken, saying*. For the

context, see above, note 134.

144. ***As You have spoken…*** Implying that God's *power* of restraint ensures that He will be *slow to anger* even toward the wicked.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 111a–b: "When Moses ascended on high, he found the blessed Holy One sitting and writing *slow to anger* (Exodus 34:6, in the list of divine attributes). He said to Him, 'Master of the Universe! *Slow to anger* toward the righteous?' He replied, 'Even toward the wicked.' He said, 'Let the wicked perish!' He said to him, 'See now what you desire.' When Israel sinned [in the incident of the scouts], He said to him, 'Didn't you say to Me: *Slow to anger* [only] toward the righteous?' He said to him, 'And didn't You reply to me: Even toward the wicked?' This corresponds to what is written: *Now, please, let YHVH's power be great, as You have spoken, saying* (Numbers 14:17)."

See *Midrash Tehillim* 93:8; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 14:17; Rashi on Numbers 14:18. Cf. BT *Eruvin* 22a; *Bava Qamma* 50a–b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:22; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 24, add. 14. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 134.

145. ***Saying…*** Implying that future generations should recite ("say") the list of divine attributes—actually, the list of thirteen attributes recorded in Exodus 34:6–7.

See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17b: *"YHVH passed before him and He called out* ['*YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger*…] (Exodus 34:6). Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'Were it not written in Scripture, it would be impossible to say this. This teaches that the blessed Holy One enwrapped himself like a cantor [literally: an emissary of the congregation] and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him, "Whenever the people of Israel sin, let them perform this service before Me [reciting the thirteen attributes] and I will forgive them."…' Rav Yehudah said, 'A covenant has been enacted concerning the thirteen attributes that they are not turned away empty-handed.'"

On the recitation of the thirteen attributes, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 68–69, 107, 160, 177–78. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 134. The context in Exodus (34:6–7) reads: *YHVH passed before him and He called out, "YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering, long-tempered*], *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*] *and truth* [or: *faithfulness*], *keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, removing iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations."* For various views on how the wording of these two verses yields thirteen attributes, see Vol. 8, p. 353, n. 110.

146. **Why did *truth* depart from here?** Why is the attribute of (*abounding in*) *truth* (which is included in the list in Exodus) missing from the list here in Numbers?

For the two lists, see the preceding note and above, note 134. On the missing attribute of *truth*, see Naḥmanides on Numbers 14:17.

147. **They caused it to depart…** The ten unfaithful scouts had spoken falsely about the Promised Land, claiming that it could not be conquered and that it *devours its inhabitants* (Numbers 13:31–32). Consequently, Moses could not include the attribute of (*abounding in*) *truth*. Similarly, three other attributes were omitted from the total of thirteen, leaving only nine attributes in the list in Numbers 14.

On the two sets of attributes, see *Zohar* 3:140a–b (*IR*), 146b–147a, 295b (*IZ*). The principle "With the very measure by which a person measures…" appears frequently in rabbinic literature; it underscores the meting out of poetic justice. See, e.g., M *Sotah* 1:7.

148. ***according to your word*, exactly!…** See BT *Berakhot* 32a: "It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishma'el: *According to your word*—the nations of the world will one day say so. Happy is the disciple to whom his

master concedes!" The phrase "will one day say so" alludes to Moses' argument as to why God should forgive Israel: *If You put this people to death, as a single man, the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, "Because of YHVH's inability to bring this people to the land that He swore to them, He slaughtered them in the desert*" (Numbers 14:15–16).

1. ***Rav Metivta* רב מתיבתא...** “Head [or: Master] of the Academy.” Here begins an account of a visionary journey undertaken by Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions to the Garden of Eden, and the mysteries they hear from the head of the Heavenly Academy. It was incorporated into the *Zohar*’s commentary on *Parashat Shelaḥ Lekha* (3:161b–174a), presumably because the Generation of the Desert figures prominently in *Rav Metivta* and the decree that this generation will perish in the desert first appears in this *parashah* (Numbers 14:20–35).

The truncated opening line indicates that the beginning of *Rav Metivta* is lost, unless the author intended to start in mid-sentence in order to startle his readers, plunging them right into the fantastic narrative. The printed editions and V20 begin here, whereas J3 opens with the following paragraph.

On the Heavenly Academy, see, e.g., BT *Berakhot* 18b, *Bava Metsi’a* 85a–86a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:11; *Zohar* 1:4a, 7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 41a (*Heikh*); 2:96b, 190b–191a; 3:185b–186a, 192a, 197b, 203b, 221a, 241b; *ZḤ* 36b; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 280–81, 285, 288–91 (134–37); Scholem, *Devarim be-Go*, 1:278–83; Gafni, “‘Yeshivah’ u-‘Mtivta,”’ 29–31; Kadari, “Talmud Torah, Mistiqah ve-Eskhatologyah.” On the distinction between the Heavenly Academy and the Supreme Academy, see below, note 43.

On the section *Rav Metivta*, see above, page xi; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 150–53; Wolski and Carmeli, “Those Who Know Have Wings”; Benarroch, “Sava ve-Yanuqa,” 297; Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, “Likhtov o Lo Likhtov?”

2. **from that opening...** A certain opening within the Garden of Eden. Having glimpsed various wonders, the Companions are convinced that they are worthy of eternal life in the world that is coming.

3. **the official…** Their angelic guide in the Garden of Eden.

The reference to פרדס (*pardes*), "an orchard," recalls the famous story of four rabbis who "entered the *pardes*," that is, who engaged in mystical contemplation. See *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:4; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; BT *Ḥagigah* 14b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4. Cf. *ZḤ* 90b (*MhN, Rut*); below, pp. 791–92, n. 74.

4. ***In this desert…*** In this verse, God declares that all of the Israelites above the age of twenty would eventually die in the desert before they could enter the Promised Land (except for the two virtuous scouts, Caleb and Joshua).

According to the Masters of Scripture, the divine decree is limited to physical death, since this entire generation is assured of eternal life "in another place," namely here in the Garden of Eden.

See M *Sanhedrin* 10:3: "The Generation of the Desert has no share in the world that is coming and will not stand in the [Last] Judgment, as is said: *In this desert they shall come to an end, and there they shall die* (Numbers 14:35). These are the words of Rabbi Akiva. But Rabbi Eli'ezer says, 'Of them Scripture says *Gather to Me My devoted ones, who over sacrifice seal My pact* (Psalms 50:5).'"

See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:10; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:3, 29c; BT *Sanhedrin* 110b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 36; *Kallah Rabbati* 3:21; *Pitron Torah*, 15. On the Generation of the Desert as being assured of a share in the world that is coming, see also *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 32; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:13. Cf. *Zohar* 1:113a–b (*MhN*).

On the Generation of the Desert as being "a Generation of Knowledge," see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:23; *Zohar* 2:62b; *ZḤ* 53a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 79 (100). Cf. *Zohar* 3:287a. On the great status of this generation, see also *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 19:11; JT *Avodah Zarah* 1:1,

39b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 13:2 (and parallels); *Midrash Tehillim* 1:20; *Zohar* 1:22a (Vol. 1, p. 169, n. 491); 2:82a–b; 3:181b; below at note 171; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 86–93. Cf. *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3: "A maidservant by the [Red] Sea saw what Ezekiel and all the other prophets did not see." See Vol. 4, p. 289, n. 324; p. 448, n. 299.

5. **Whoever ceases shall cease…** These same questions appear in *Zohar* 1:122b (*Tos*).

6. **that great eagle…** The most imposing (swift, high-flying) of birds. In Ezekiel's famous vision (Ezekiel 1:10), each of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne has four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of a bull on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. The phrase *the great eagle* appears in Ezekiel 17:3, where it symbolizes King Nebuchadnezzar. It was eventually bestowed as an honorific title upon Maimonides (and occasionally other great scholars).

Here "that great eagle" designates Rabbi Ilai of Nisibis, who figures prominently in the first part of *Rav Metivta*. Historically, the name Rabbi Ilai refers to both a first-to-second-century *tanna* and a third-to-fourth-century Palestinian *amora*. Nisibis was a Mesopotamian trading station and a center of Torah learning.

On the identity of Rabbi Ilai, see Wolski and Carmeli, "Those Who Know Have Wings," 90. On gathering herbs, see *Zohar* 2:80a–b; 3:198b. Cf. 1:94b, 126a; 2:171a–172a; *ZḤ* 16a (*MhN*). On shamanic parallels, see Wolski and Carmeli, "Those Who Know Have Wings," 93–108.

The mention of a cave in relation to the Garden of Eden recalls the Zoharic tradition about the Cave of Machpelah, originally purchased by Abraham as a burial site for Sarah. In this cave were buried three of the matriarchs (but not Rachel) and the three patriarchs. According to rabbinic legend, Adam and Eve were buried in this cave as well. Based on this tradition, the *Zohar* teaches that the Cave of Machpelah leads to the Garden of Eden.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 58:4, 8; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 5, p. 105; BT *Eruvin* 53a, *Sotah* 13a, *Bava Batra* 58a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 20, 36; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 49:21; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 23:9; *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*), 57b, 81a (*ST*), 127a–128b, 219a, 248b, 250b; 2:151b; 3:70b, 164a; *ZḤ* 21a (*MhN*), 79d (*MhN, Rut*).

On a cave and the Garden, see also *Zohar* 2:13a–b. On the Cave of Machpelah in connection with the story of the scouts, see above, p. 24, n. 60.

According to rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on together with his son, Rabbi El'azar, hid from the Roman authorities in a cave for thirteen years. In kabbalistic lore, the *Zohar* itself was composed or hidden in a cave. See Vol. 4, p. 66, n. 291.

7. **Bezalel...** The master craftsman of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle). According to Exodus 31:3, YHVH declares: *I have filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge*. Rabbinic legend (BT *Berakhot* 55a) relates that "Bezalel knew how to combine the letters by which heaven and earth were created." On Bezalel and his academy, see *Zohar* 1:9a; 3:163b.

Here the angelic guide tells the Companions that when Bezalel descends daily from the Academy on High to the Garden of Eden, Rabbi Ilai's son greets him with three brief teachings—for example, the three cryptic remarks that the Companions just heard (above at note 5).

On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*]."

8. **Regarding what he said...** The angelic guide explains the child's enigmatic teachings.

Cf. M *Avot* 3:7 (attributed in some versions to Rabbi Shim'on): "One who is walking on the way and studying, and interrupts his study and says, 'How beautiful is this

tree! How beautiful is this ploughed field!'—Scripture considers him liable to the death penalty." See David ben Abraham Maimuni (grandson of Maimonides), *Midrash David*, 63–64. His comment on this passage in *Avot* reads like a paraphrase of the guide's explanation.

The phrase "idle chatter" renders מלין בטלין (*millin betelin*), "idle words (or matters)." The guide's explanations appear also in *Zohar* 1:122b (*Tos*).

9. **whoever shortens 'Amen'...** When responding to a ritual blessing, one should not rush his Amen.

See BT *Berakhot* 47a: "Rav Ḥisda said... 'Whoever responds with Amen longer than necessary surely errs.' Our Rabbis taught, 'One should not respond with אמן חטופה (*amen ḥatufah*), a snatched Amen [i.e., hastily slurring over the first letter, or perhaps saying Amen before the blessing is completed], nor with a curtailed Amen [i.e., cutting off the final letter], nor with an orphaned Amen [i.e., without having heard the blessing itself], nor should one hurl a blessing out of his mouth [quickly and without devotion].' Ben Azzai said, 'Whoever responds with an orphaned Amen, his sons will be orphans; with a snatched Amen, his days will snatched; with a curtailed Amen, his days will be curtailed. And whoever prolongs Amen, his days and years will be prolonged.'"

See *Tosefta Megillah* 3:27; JT *Berakhot* 8:8, 12c; *Sukkah* 3:10, 54a; *Megillah* 1:8, 72a; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 5:1208–9; below, p. 750, n. 54.

10. **whoever utters אחד (*eḥad*), *one*...** While reciting the opening line of the *Shema: Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is* אחד (*eḥad*), *one* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

See BT *Berakhot* 13b: "Symmachus says, 'Whoever prolongs אחד (*eḥad*), *one*—his days and years will be prolonged.' Rav Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'And [he should prolong] the ד (*dalet*) [i.e., the final letter of אחד (*eḥad*)].' Rav Ashi said, 'Provided that he does not snatch [i.e., hastily slur over] the ח (*ḥet*) [i.e., the middle letter].'"

Whereas a person should not "snatch the ח (*ḥet*)," there was a medieval tradition that one should snatch the א (*alef*) of אחד (*eḥad*). See Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1:14. Moses de León writes (in *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 27): "I found in the *Yerushalmi* [one of his code names for the *Zohar*]: 'One must snatch the א (*alef*) of אחד (*eḥad*).'"

Cf. Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, p. 10; Abraham ben David, *Hassagot* on Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Qer'iat Shema* 2:9; Moses of Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*, positive commandments 18; Jonah Gerondi, *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 61:8; idem, *Sefer ha-Yir'ah*, p. 20; Asher ben Yeḥiel on BT *Berakhot* 13b. On the passage in *Berakhot*, see JT *Berakhot* 2:1, 4a; *Zohar* 1:12a. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 61b.

11. **He said further...** The Companions report to their angelic guide another cryptic remark that they heard from Rabbi Ilai's son. For similar numerical riddles, see *Zohar* 1:32b, 77a; 2:12b, 95a.

12. **These are two names in *Shema Yisra'el*...** The guide explains that Rabbi Ilai's son is alluding to the three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema*: *Hear, O Israel!* יהוה יהוה אלהינו (*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *YHVH our God, YHVH, is one*.

Here the names *YHVH YHVH* apparently symbolize *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* (or alternatively *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*), while the name *Eloheinu* likely represents *Tif'eret*, who is also known as "truth."

Medieval Christian polemics asserted that the three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema* signify the Trinity. The *Zohar*, instead, presents a kabbalistic triad, insisting that "they are one in single union."

See *Zohar* 1:15b, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 160b, 162a; 3:203b–204a, 263a; *ZḤ* 56d–57a (*QhM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:972–74 (surveying the various sefirotic correspondents of *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*); Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 18–19; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140–45. For various interpretations of *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH* here, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei*

Orot; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1006, n. 267; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The phrase “the seal of the signet ring: truth” derives from the rabbinic saying “The seal of the blessed Holy One is truth.” See JT *Sanhedrin* 1:1, 18a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 81:2; BT *Shabbat* 55a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:10; *Shemot Rabbah* 4:13; *Zohar* 1:2b; 3:54b, 81a, 297a; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 236–37, n. 56.

13. **They are two, turning into one…** The Companions report yet another riddle spoken by Rabbi Ilai’s son.

14. **These are the two cherubim…** The angelic guide explains that the image of “two, turning into one” refers to God’s two cherubim, one of which was concealed when Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egyptian exile.

The verse in Psalms (which appears almost identically in 2 Samuel 22:11) demonstrates that now in a time of exile God rides upon a single cherub.

On the two cherubim, see Exodus 25:18–22; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 1 Kings 6:23–28; 2 Kings 19:15; Isaiah 37:16; Psalms 80:2; 1 Chronicles 13:6. Cf. Genesis 3:24. On the transition from two cherubim to one during exile, see *Midrash Zuta, Shir ha-Shirim* 1:13; *Zohar* 2:176a; *ZḤ* 86a (*MhN, Rut*), 92d (*MhN, Eikhah*).

Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, both Joseph and Benjamin symbolize *Yesod*. See *Zohar* 1:153b–154a, 155a–b; 2:104b. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Yahel Or*; *Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*; Benarroch, “Sava ve-Yanuqa,” 82–83.

15. **He is hidden away…** Riding on the single cherub, the blessed Holy One soars away into hidden worlds.

16. **That official gave them another rose…** Evidently, the Companions had already received one rose, but that part of the story is missing both in the manuscripts and printed editions. See above, note 1. On the cave, see above, note 6.

17. **They saw the eagle…** Namely, Rabbi Ilai, who is very glad to meet them. See above at note 6.

By inhaling the aroma of the rose, the Companions enter the portal of another realm. See *Or Yaqar*; Wolski and Carmeli, "Those Who Know Have Wings," 102–8. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 43b, in the name of Rav: "What is it that gives enjoyment to the soul and not to the body? You must say that this is fragrance."

18. **They arrived at another orchard…** Accompanied by Rabbi Ilai, who now assumes the image of a man, as radiant as the Masters of Mishnah.

As mentioned above (note 6), the face of a human and the face of an eagle both figure prominently in Ezekiel's vision. On the significance of the term פרדס (*pardes*), "orchard," see above, note 3.

19. **He said to those who were seated…** Rabbi Ilai tells the Masters of Mishnah to welcome the Companions, who are now themselves considered Masters.

20. **the two roses…** See above, notes 16–17.

21. **Be seated…** The Masters of Mishnah invite the Companions to join them, and these new arrivals eagerly learn fresh insights.

On the theme of thirty *halakhot*, cf. BT *Sukkah* 28a: "It happened once that Rabbi Eli'ezer spent the Sabbath in Upper Galilee, and they asked him for thirty *halakhot* among the *halakhot* of Sukkah. Concerning twelve of these he said, 'I have heard [from my teachers]'; concerning eighteen he said, 'I have not heard anything.' Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah says, 'Just the opposite: concerning eighteen he said, "I have heard"; concerning twelve he said, "I have not heard."'"

22. **They returned to the Masters of Scripture…** The Companions return to the Masters of Scripture, whom they had encountered previously (above at note 4).

In rabbinic sources the verse from Psalms is applied to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, who initially achieved a semi-

divine status by “placing doing before listening”—that is, by declaring *All that YHVH has spoken* נעשה ונשמע (*na’aseh ve-nishma*), *we will do and we will heed* [or: *listen*] (Exodus 24:7). Thereby, the people demonstrated true faith: committing themselves to fulfill God’s word even before hearing the details. However, as soon as Israel worshiped the Golden Calf, they fell back into the clutches of mortality.

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 320: “You stood at Mount Sinai and said, *All that YHVH has spoken* נעשה ונשמע (*na’aseh ve-nishma*), *we will do and we will heed* [or: *listen*] (Exodus 24:7)—*I Myself said, ‘You are gods’* (Psalms 82:6). As soon as you said of the Calf, *These are your gods, O Israel* (Exodus 32:4)—I Myself said to you, *‘Yet indeed like a human you shall die’* (Psalms 82:7).”

Cf. BT *Avodah Zarah* 5a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: “Israel accepted the Torah only so that the Angel of Death would have no dominion over them, as is said: *‘I Myself said, “You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you.”* Now that you have acted corruptly [by worshiping the Golden Calf], *yet indeed like a human you shall die.’”*

See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9; *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 32:20; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:1; 11:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:16; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 47; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 16, *Eqev* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ*, add. 2; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:1, 7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:24; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179; *Zohar* 1:131b, 228a; 2:236b.

The conclusion of this paragraph indicates that by the process of death and decomposition, the evil impulse is purged. See *Zohar* 1:116a (*MhN*).

23. **The old man presiding…** Over the Masters of Scripture. He quotes a verse from *Parashat Shelaḥ Lekha* (“here”) and applies it to the evil impulse, which is pictured as a corpse. The plural noun *your corpses* alludes to both the male and female aspects of the evil impulse, corresponding to the male and female demonic forces: Samael and Lilith.

The evil impulse represents a human deficiency. The verse in Samuel demonstrates that the root פגר (*pgr*) implies "weakness, deficiency." The full verse reads: *David continued the pursuit, he and four hundred men, and the two hundred men who* פגרו (*piggeru*), *were too faint* [or: *weak*; *exhausted*; *dead tired*] *to cross the Wadi Besor stayed behind*.

The formulation "In holiness, one progresses…" derives from a rabbinic principle: "One raises [or: progresses, increases, promotes] in holiness, and does not lower." In its original context, this principle means that one should progress from a lesser to a greater degree of holiness and not the reverse, or that a person may be promoted to a higher or more dignified level but not demoted. See M *Sheqalim* 6:4; BT *Berakhot* 28a, *Shabbat* 21b, *Yoma* 20b, 73a, *Megillah* 21b, *Horayot* 12b; *Zohar* 2:132b, 182b; 3:152b–153a, 285a. On the converse formulation—"in defilement, one always regresses…"—cf. *Tosefta Bava Metsi'a* 2:33; BT *Avodah Zarah* 26b.

24. **The end of the verse proves it…** The full verse reads: *Your own corpses* יפלו (*yippelu*), *will fall, in this desert*. The old man distinguishes between the Israelites themselves and their evil impulse—their *corpses*. Concerning the latter, Scripture states *yippelu*, *they will fall*, and a few verses later: *In this desert they shall come to an end, and there they shall die*. However, the Israelites themselves will gain eternal life, as demonstrated by the presence of their souls here in the Garden of Eden.

See M *Sanhedrin* 10:3: "The Generation of the Desert has no share in the world that is coming, and it will not stand in the [Last] Judgment, as is said: *In this desert they shall come to an end, and there they shall die* (Numbers 14:35). These are the words of Rabbi Akiva. But Rabbi Eli'ezer says, 'Of them Scripture says *Gather to Me My devoted ones, who over sacrifice seal My pact* (Psalms 50:5).'"

Whereas the Mishnah records two conflicting views regarding the fate of the generation of the desert, here the old man assigns one fate to the Israelites' *corpses* (namely their evil impulse) and the other to the Israelites themselves. See above, note 4.

25. **Masters of *Aggadah*...** Who delve into the deepest secrets. Here *Aggadah* implies Kabbalah, as indicated by *Haggahot Maharḥu*. Cf. *Or Yaqar*.

26. **to enter among them** To join the Masters of *Aggadah*.

27. **people digging graves...** Members of the Generation of the Desert, who die a symbolic death each day.

At Sinai, the Israelites were cleansed of the impurity injected into humanity by the primordial serpent in the Garden of Eden, and they could have become immortal. (On mortality as the consequence of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, see Genesis 2:17; 3:3, 19.) But when they sinned by worshiping the Golden Calf, the serpent regained his power over them, condemning them to mortality—represented here by their "previous bodies, strange bodies." The verse in Exodus now implies that the Israelites *stripped themselves* of their immortal radiant bodies.

Here, in the Garden of Eden, the Israelites seen by the Companions are purged daily of the serpent's slime and reborn with radiant bodies.

See BT *Yevamot* 103b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust]. Israel, who stood at Mount Sinai—their filth ceased. Star-worshipers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease." See above, p. 43, n. 121.

On the verse in Exodus, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ*, add. 1: "'You came to Mount Sinai, and I Myself descended and spoke with you along with thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels, whom I brought down for

your sake. I entrusted each and every Israelite with two angels.' Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'One [angel] girded [each Israelite] with his weapon, and one placed a crown upon [each Israelite's] head.' … Rabbi Simoi said, 'He clothed them with [His] royal purple cloak….' Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai said, 'He adorned them with weapons engraved with the Ineffable Name [*YHVH*]; and as long as they possessed these, no evil could touch them, neither the Angel of Death nor anything else. As soon as they sinned [with the Golden Calf], Moses said to them: *Now take off your ornaments, and I will know what I should do with you* (Exodus 33:5). At that moment, *The people heard this evil word, and they mourned*, [*and no one put on his ornaments*] (ibid., 4). What is written? *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments* (ibid., 6).'"

Just as Adam's sin had inflicted death upon the world, so did Israel's sin with the Golden Calf. See BT *Avodah Zarah* 5a, quoted above, note 22.

On the members of the Generation of the Desert lying in graves regularly, see JT *Ta'anit* 4:8, 69c; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 33. On the passage in *Tanḥuma*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 356; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:29; *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 33:4, 6; *Targum Shir ha-Shirim* 2:17; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; BT *Shabbat* 88a; *Avodah Zarah* 5a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 47; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tissa* 15; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 10, 37a; 33, 153b–154a; *Shemot Rabbah* 45:2; 51:8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:24; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179; Naḥmanides on Exodus 33:6; *Zohar* 1:52b, 63b, 126b; 2:193b, 227a; 3:169b, 193a; Green, *Keter*, 70–71.

28. **Oholiab…** Bezalel's associate, from the tribe of Dan. See Exodus 31:6. The thrones are intended for those worthy of sitting and listening to secrets of Torah.

29. **they saw a dwelling…** The heavenly archetype of the earthly Dwelling (or Tabernacle). See *Bemidbar Rabbah*

12:12, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “When the blessed Holy One told Israel to erect the Dwelling, He hinted to the angels that they too should construct a Dwelling. When it was erected below, it was erected above.” See Vol. 5, pp. 309–10, n. 337. The term מלין (*milin*), “miles,” refers to the Roman mile, slightly shorter than the modern mile.

30. **Bezalel is fourth…** As explained below (at note 60) by Rabbi Ilai.

By withstanding the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife, Joseph proved his virtue and attained the rung of *Yesod*, the divine phallus. This *sefirah* can be pictured as “fourth,” following the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret* (which symbolize the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). On the association of Bezalel with *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 2:152a, 214b, 224a, 225a.

The phrase “beloved of all” recalls Genesis 37:3: *Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, for he was to him a child of old age*.

The full verse in Numbers, describing the daily ascent offering, reads: *Its libation, one-fourth of a* hin *for each lamb in the sanctuary, to pour out as a libation of strong drink to YHVH*. The liquid measure הין (*hin*) equals approximately 3.6 liters. On the sefirotic association of *one-fourth of a* hin, cf. *Zohar* 3:247b, 297b.

31. **Whoever gazes and sees…** Whoever peers too deeply into the secret realms.

See BT *Ḥagigah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Naḥmani: “Whoever gazes at three things, his eyes become dim: at the rainbow, at the *nasi*, and at the priests [when they are blessing the people].” All these three are associated with the Divine Presence. The rainbow is compared to *the Glory of YHVH* in Ezekiel 1:28. The *nasi* (the head of the Sanhedrin) was seen as endowed with divine authority or splendor. And when the priests blessed the people in the Temple, reciting the name *YHVH, Shekhinah* rested upon them.

Cf. M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: “Whoever contemplates [or: gazes upon] four things, better for him if he had never come into the world: what is above? what is below? what was before? and what will be after?”

Rabbi Ilai eventually explains most of these cryptic statements below (at notes 61–65).

32. **those two roses…** See above, notes 16–17, 20.

33. **Rabbi Shim’on said…** This comment describes what happened after the Companions left the Garden of Eden and returned to this world. As they were about to record the two mysteries that they were told to keep secret, they found written the verse from Psalms.

The clause “I asked my grandfather” renders לאבי אבא ואנא שאילנא (*va-ana sha’eilna la-avi abba*), which can also be construed as “I asked my father, ‘Father…’” The clause “one who wields them” means “one who knows how to utter the mysteries potently.”

On building and destroying worlds, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:7, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: “The blessed Holy One kept creating worlds and destroying them, until He created these [i.e., heaven and earth]. Then He declared, ‘These please Me; those do not.’” See Vol. 8, pp. 325–26, n. 18.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *I said, “Let me guard my ways from sinning with my tongue. Let me keep a muzzle on my mouth as long as a wicked person is before me.”*

34. **They smelled it and emerged…** By inhaling the aroma of the apple, the Companions are able to emerge safely without forgetting anything. Cf. above, note 17.

35. **beaming like the sun…** See JT *Shabbat* 8:1, 11a: “Rabbi Abbahu went to Tiberias. The disciples of Rabbi Yoḥanan saw him with his face shining. They said before Rabbi Yoḥanan, ‘Rabbi Abbahu has found a treasure!’ He said to them, ‘Why [do you say so]?’ They replied, ‘His face is shining.’ He said to them, ‘Perhaps he has heard some new Torah.’ He went to him and asked, ‘What new Torah did you hear?’ He replied, ‘An ancient *tosefta*.’ [Rabbi

Yoḥanan] applied to him the verse *A person's wisdom lights up his face* (Ecclesiastes 8:1)."

See JT *Pesaḥim* 10:1, 37c; *Sheqalim* 3:2, 47c; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 63a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 8:1; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 19; *Zohar* 1:94b, 190a, 218a; 2:15a (*MhN*); 3:267a–b; *ZḤ* 5d (*MhN*), 20d (*MhN*). In two of the JT passages (*Shabbat* and *Pesaḥim*), Rabbi Ilai's name appears shortly before this story about Rabbi Abbahu.

36. **on this mountain...** The Garden of Eden is pictured here as situated on a mountain. Cf. Ezekiel 28:13, 16.

37. **this people of the desert...** The generation of Israelites who wandered through the desert and died before they could enter the Promised Land. See above, notes 4, 24, 27.

The dew and oil symbolize the flow of emanation, which proceeds from the highest *sefirot* to *Ḥesed* (Love), symbolized by Aaron, and then to all the lower rungs. See Psalms 133:2–3: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes. Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life*. See below, p. 468, n. 561.

On dew reviving the dead, see below, note 106. On the destiny of souls on new moons, Sabbaths, and festivals, see above, p. 31, n. 79.

38. **the Academy of Moses...** On his academy, see [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 285 (136).

39. **his facial veil...** When Moses descended from Mount Sinai his face was beaming so intensely that the Israelites feared to approach him; so he placed a veil over his face, which he removed only when returning to encounter God. See Exodus 34:29–35.

Only Aaron is situated right by Moses, barely separated from him by a curtain. The image of "seven clouds of glory"

derives from rabbinic tradition, according to which such clouds shielded Israel in the desert. See, e.g., *Tosefta Sotah* 4:2; *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ, Petiḥta*; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 13:21; *Sifrei*, Numbers 106; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 1:2.

40. **Corresponding to the renewed radiance of Torah…** The greater the radiance of Torah from the Academy of Moses, the more brightly those clouds shine. Although Moses' face itself cannot be seen, the radiance from within his veil shines forth brilliantly.

41. **Moses utters a statement—unexplained…** Which Aaron then explains, inspired by founts of wisdom.

The phrase "that were blocked to him" alludes to the rabbinic tradition that when Moses died and was replaced by Joshua, "three thousand *halakhot* were forgotten." See BT *Temurah* 15b–16a. Cf. above, note 21.

42. **all the virtuous women…** Of the generation of the Israelites who wandered in the desert. On holy days ("at these times"), they approach Miriam, delving with her into divine mysteries.

The description of ascending "like columns of smoke in this desert" derives from Song of Songs 3:6: *Who is this rising from the desert like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, all sorts of merchant's powders* [or: *more fragrant with myrrh and frankincense than all the merchant's powders*]? In *Zohar* 3:53a, the verse is applied to souls who have been punished in Hell and purged of their sins, finally ascending from there.

According to one rabbinic tradition, the Israelite women of the desert generation refused to donate their gold jewelry for the fashioning of the Golden Calf. (See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 32:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:9; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 45; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 19, *Pineḥas* 7; *Tanḥuma* [Buber], *Pineḥas* 7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:10.) According to another tradition, the women did not accept the negative report of the ten scouts. (See the preceding three sources.) For further rabbinic praise of the women,

see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:9. On the women's academies in the Garden of Eden, see below at notes 149–57.

43. **the Heavenly Academy…** On the distinction between the Heavenly Academy (or the Academy of the Firmament), headed by Metatron, and the Supreme Academy (headed by God Himself), see *Zohar* 3:173a, 192a, 197b, 203b; *ZḤ* 36b; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 280–81 (134–35); *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 23:9. Cf. the opening note in this chapter; BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b; and Kadari, "Talmud Torah, Mistiqah ve-Eskhatologyah," 185.

44. ***You shall be* תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*…** The word *tamim* also appears in Genesis, where the context (17:1–2) reads: *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, YHVH appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My presence* [or: *before Me*] *and be* תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted* [or: *blameless, innocent, complete, perfect, unblemished*], *and I will grant My covenant between Me and you and I will increase you very greatly."* This divine directive is soon followed by the covenantal command of circumcision (verses 9–14).

The full verse in Genesis 25 reads: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, whereas Jacob was* איש תם (*ish tam*), *a simple man, dwelling in tents*. The word *tam* means "simple, innocent, plain, mild, quiet, sound, wholesome, complete, perfect." *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc., renders it: שלים (*shelim*), "complete, perfect, consummate." Here, Rabbi Ilai adopts this rendering as an allusion to Jacob's "complete" fulfillment of circumcision, which includes two stages. First, the foreskin is cut and removed, disclosing the mucous membrane. Then, the membrane is torn down the middle and pulled back, revealing the corona. This second act is called פריעה (*peri'ah*), "uncovering" the corona.

Whereas Abraham completed only the first stage of circumcision, by experiencing *peri'ah* Jacob completely

eliminated the demonic refuse associated with being uncircumcised. See below, note 50. In kabbalistic terms, Abraham symbolizes *Ḥesed* (on the right), whereas Jacob symbolizes the more complete and balanced realm of *Tif'eret* (including both *Ḥesed* on the right and *Din* on the left).

On *tam* and *tamim*, see below at notes 108–9. On *tamim* and circumcision, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 46:1, 4–5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:6; M *Nedarim* 3:11; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; BT *Nedarim* 31b–32a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 29; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 6; *Lekh Lekha* 21; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 6:9; 17:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Zohar* 1:59b, 95a–b, 200b, 246a; 3:14a, 142a (*IR*), 165b–166a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 228, 376. On Jacob as *ish tam*, *a complete man*, see *Zohar* 1:146a, 167b, 173b, 222a; 2:78b, 175b; 3:12b.

On Jacob's being completely free of refuse (or blemish), see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 6:4; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:11; BT *Shabbat* 146a; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 39; *Tanḥuma, Va'etḥannan* 6, *Vayelekh* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 118:20; Vol. 5, pp. 298–99, n. 301.

On the two stages of circumcision, see M *Shabbat* 19:6: "If one circumcises but does not uncover the circumcision, it is as if he has not circumcised." See also *Zohar* 1:13a, 32a (*Tos*), 32a–b, 93b, 96b, 98b (*ST*), 238b; 2:3b, 40a, 57b, 60b–61a, 66b–67a, 125b; 3:91b, 95b, 180b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 133; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 55 (67).

45. **How was he 'uncovered'...** The demonic refuse associated with being uncircumcised is strengthened by the power of *Din* (Judgment) on the Left. This *sefirah* is symbolized by the ox in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:10). In that vision, each of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne has four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of a bull (or ox) on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back.

Rabbi Ilai associates the שור (*shor*), "ox," with the rabbinic notion of שור תם (*shor tam*), "an innocent ox," that is,

an ox that has not gored anyone on more than three occasions. The Mishnah distinguishes between *shor tam* (an innocent ox) and שור מועד (*shor mu'ad*), "a forewarned ox," that is, an ox that has already gored three times and whose owner has been duly warned. The owner of *shor tam* is liable for only half of the resulting damage, whereas the owner of *shor mu'ad* must pay in full.

As Rabbi Ilai explains below, *tam*, "innocent, complete," signifies *Shekhinah*, who is also pictured as the Divine Throne. So the ox (who is linked with the Throne in Ezekiel's vision) is appropriately called *shor tam*, "an innocent ox." The "insignia of the Covenant" may allude to *Shekhinah* Herself or to *Yesod*, the divine phallus and site of the covenant of circumcision.

Since Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret* (who balances and harmonizes right and left), he "holds within himself" the power of *Din* (on the left), symbolized by the ox. With this power, he succeeds in eliminating the demonic refuse. Fittingly, Jacob—who is איש תם (*ish tam*), *a complete man*—includes *shor tam*, "an innocent ox."

On *shor tam* and *shor mu'ad*, see Exodus 21:35–36; M *Bava Qamma* 1:4; *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 10, 12; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 21:35–36; *Zohar* 3:180b; Vol. 10, p. 549 (which also associates *ish tam* with *shor tam*). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Yahel Or*; *Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*.

46. **In the Mishnah of Bezalel...** This secret source discusses the significance of the wording *God remembered Rachel* [*and God heard her and He opened her womb*]. Regarding Rachel's grandmother, Sarah (who was also barren), Scripture employs a different verb to describe how God fulfilled His promise that Sarah would conceive: *God* פקד (*paqad*), *attended to, Sarah as He had said, and YHVH did for Sarah as He had spoken*. The verbal root זכר (*zkhr*), "to remember," alludes to זכר (*zakhar*), "male." Jacob (Rachel's husband) symbolizes *Tif'eret*, the core of the Divine

Male, and when he fathered Joseph (who symbolizes *Yesod*), he embodied the "complete Covenant" (since *Yesod* represents the divine phallus and site of the covenant of circumcision).

Jacob demonstrated his completeness by incorporating and assuaging the power of the left side (symbolized by the ox), thereby ensuring that this power would not fortify the Other Side. Jacob also conveyed this power of the ox to his son Joseph, which explains why Joseph is associated with the image of *his firstling ox*.

On פקידה (*peqidah*), "attending," (pertaining to Sarah) and זכירה (*zekhirah*), "remembering," (pertaining to Rachel), see *Zohar* 1:115a, 159b. The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *His firstling bull* [or: *ox*] *is his glory, wild ox's antlers his horns. With them he gores peoples, all together, the ends of the earth*. See *Zohar* 1:200b; 3:14a.

On Bezalel and his academy, see above, note 7. The reference to "the Mishnah of Bezalel" alludes to a secret, mystical Mishnah apparently known only in the *Zohar*'s circle. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* often refers to "our Mishnah," as distinct from the standard Mishnah. See below, pp. 747–48, n. 48.

47. **That ox is *shor tam*...** Signifying the power of the left. Jacob, who attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, includes this power within himself. (See above, note 45.) Having reached that rung, he is called Master of the House, namely Husband of *Shekhinah*.

On the title "master of the house" (as applied to both Jacob and Moses), see *Zohar* 1:21b, 138b, 152b, 236b, 239a; 2:22b, 78b, 235b, 238b, 244b (*Heikh*). Cf. 2:99b; 3:191b. For the full verse in Genesis (and on *ish tam*), see above, note 44.

48. **שור מועד (*shor mu'ad*), a forewarned ox...** That is, an ox that has already gored three times and whose owner has been duly warned. (See above, note 45.) Whereas *shor tam* (an innocent ox) symbolizes the *sefirah* of *Din* on the left, the

dangerous *shor mu'ad* represents the demonic force (associated with the foreskin), which derives from the left side. From this demonic power issue numerous threatening underlings.

The donkey represents a kindred demonic force, and the command in Deuteronomy against plowing *with an ox and a donkey together* is understood as a warning not to stimulate the union of these two threatening powers. See *Zohar* 1:166b, 172b; 2:6a, 64b–65a; 3:86b, 207a.

The demonic name שאיה (*She'iyyah*), "Desolation," derives from Isaiah 24:12: *Horror remains in the city*, ושאיה (*u-sh'iyyah*), *and* [to] *ruins* [or: *desolation*], *the gate is battered*. Rabbi Ilai's treatment here of *she'iyyah* is based on the Talmud and Rashi. In the former, *she'iyyah* is transformed from an abstract noun into a goring demon. See BT *Bava Qamma* 21a: *"U-sh'iyyah, And* [*by*] *desolation, the gate is battered*. Mar son of Rav Ashi said, 'I myself have seen him, and he gores like an ox.'" Commenting on this passage, Rashi adds the element of uninhabited houses. See BT *Sotah* 48a; Rashi on BT *Sotah* 48a, s.v. *u-sh'iyyah*; on *Bava Qamma* 21a, s.v. *she-ne'emar u-sh'iyyah*; on *Bava Qamma* 97a, s.v. *u-sh'iyyah*; and on Isaiah 24:12. On *peri'ah* ("uncovering" the corona), see above, note 44.

49. **In that Academy of Bezalel...** Cf. above at note 7. "The two Academies" are the Heavenly Academy and the Supreme Academy. See above, note 43.

In all three academies, Jacob's description as *ish tam* was interpreted as "*husband of tam*, complete one," that is, "husband of *Shekhinah*," who represents the completion of the flow of emanation.

Jacob, symbolizing *Tif'eret*, is called here "א (*alef*), mystery of ואו (*vav*)." The letter *vav* (whose numerical value is six) often alludes to *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). The description of *alef* as "mystery of ואו (*vav*)" probably alludes to the diagonal central shaft of the *alef*, which looks like a *vav*. Alternatively,

this alludes to the fact that the letter *alef* appears in the middle of the full spelling of the name of the letter ואו (*vav*).

When *Tif'eret* unites with *Shekhinah*, they become "totality of male and female as one." Their union is symbolized by the joining of *alef* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) with ת (*tav*) and מ (*mem*), the two letters that form *Shekhinah*'s title תם (*tam*), "complete (one)." All three letters spell the word אמת (*emet*), "truth," which here signifies *Tif'eret* united with *Shekhinah*.

On *ish* as husband, see, e.g., Leviticus 21:7; Ruth 1:3. On *ish tam*, see above, note 44. On *ish tam* as *husband of tam*, see *Zohar* 2:78b.

On the shaft of the *alef* as a *vav*, see *Zohar* 1:21a; *ZḤ* 5c (*SO*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 87–89 (111–12). Cf. *Zohar* 3:73a, 92a, 193b. The full verse in Micah reads: *You will grant truth to Jacob, love to Abraham, as You swore to our fathers from days of old*.

50. **Abraham was not commanded about *peri'ah*, uncovering...** When God commanded him to circumcise himself, this involved only the first stage of circumcision (cutting and removing the foreskin), not the second, known as *peri'ah* ("uncovering" the corona). The first stage corresponds to *Shekhinah*, the second to *Yesod*, the divine phallus. So when Abraham "entered" the covenant (or the divine realm), he entered *Shekhinah*—known as תם (*tam*), "complete (one)"—and all Her angelic rungs, which are known as ים (*yam*), "sea." Together these two words spell תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*—which explains why God told Abraham: *Walk in My presence and be tamim, wholehearted* (Genesis 17:1). Afterward, Abraham ascended higher, attaining the rung of *Ḥesed*, the divine right arm.

On the two stages of circumcision, see above, note 44. On Abraham's not being commanded concerning *peri'ah*, see BT *Yevamot* 71b; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 17:24; *Bereshit Rabbati* 21:4; Rashi on Genesis 17:25. For the opposite view, see *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 17:26. Cf.

Tosafot, Yevamot 71b, s.v. *lo nittenah*; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 17:24, n. 157.

51. ***with YHVH*, surely...** Just as *Shekhinah* is united with Her angelic forces—as symbolized by the combined elements of the word תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*—so each person should be unified and *tamim*. Thereby he resembles *Shekhinah* and is *with YHVH*. Then he should strive to imitate the union of *Shekhinah* with Her partner—receiving the illumination from א (*alef*), signifying *Tif'eret*, known as "mystery of Jacob." See the preceding two notes.

52. **Just now in the Academy...** Rabbi Ilai conveys a teaching from the Heavenly Academy about *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon). She reflects the white of *Ḥesed*, along with the other sefirotic colors, and is illumined by *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun).

53. **In that sea of Hers...** *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the sea. The "certain fish" is the חלזון (*ḥillazon*), which has been identified as the *Murex trunculus* snail, from whose gland is extracted the dye known as תכלת (*tekhelet*), often translated "blue," but technically referring to purple, bluish purple, or violet.

In Numbers 15, the Israelites are commanded to make ציצת (*tsitsit*), "a tassel," on the hem of their garments, and to entwine a thread dyed with *tekhelet* in the tassel. Eventually, this commandment evolved into the requirement of a special garment with tassels (or fringes) attached to its four corners. See Numbers 15:38: *They should make for themselves* ציצת (*tsitsit*), *a tassel* [or: *fringe*], *on the hems* [or: *skirts*] *of their garments for their generations, and place on the tassel of the hem a cord* [or: *twist, thread*] *of* תכלת (*tekhelet*), *purple* [or: *bluish purple*; *violet*; *blue*].

See BT *Menaḥot* 44a: "The *ḥillazon* resembles the sea in its bodily color [or: in the color of its blood], and in its shape it resembles a fish. It ascends [from the sea] once every seventy years, and with its blood one dyes *tekhelet*. So it is very expensive." On the *ḥillazon*, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy

354; BT *Shabbat* 26a, *Megillah* 6a; *Zohar* 2:48b, 149b; 3:150a, 175b; Baḥya ben Asher, Numbers 10:2.

On the association of *tekhelet* with *Shekhinah*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Whoever fulfills the commandment of [wearing] the tzitzit [Numbers 15:38–40] is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* [the color of the thread on the tassel of the garment] resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory."

See JT *Berakhot* 1:2, 3a; BT *Sotah* 17a, *Menaḥot* 43b, *Ḥullin* 89a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 14, pp. 263–64; *Tanḥuma, Shelaḥ* 15; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ* 29; *Midrash Tehillim* 24:12; 90:18; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:13. On *tekhelet* and *Shekhinah*, see also *Bahir* 62 (93); Naḥmanides on Numbers 15:31; *Zohar* 1:51a–b (describing the blue light); 2:27b, 135a, 138b–139a, 149b, 152a–b, 226b; 3:175a (*Piq*), 175b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 99.

54. **Not that this color is Her garment...** The primary garment of *Shekhinah* is described in Proverbs 31, which portrays the ideal woman, but Her outer garment is colored *tekhelet*, blue.

Beneath *Shekhinah* lie threatening powers (known as "depths of the sea") who gaze with an evil eye, but the color *tekhelet* neutralizes their malevolent gaze. The phrase "depths of the sea" appears in Micah 7:19: *You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*. See Psalms 68:23; *Zohar* 2:185b–186a; 3:63b (also in connection with the evil eye), 101b–102a, 134a (*IR*), 197a.

The verse in Numbers actually describes how the Ark was prepared for carrying when the Dwelling was disassembled and the Israelites were to set forth on the march. It reads slightly differently than the quotation above: *They shall spread a garment of pure blue above it and insert its poles*.

55. **a person who wears tzitzit…** By wearing a thread dyed with *tekhelet* on the four corners of one's garment, a person becomes תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*, and thereby resembles *Shekhinah*. See above, notes 51, 53.

56. **Then She ascends…** *Shekhinah* ascends to the higher *sefirot*. Similarly, upon donning tefillin, a person is illumined by higher *sefirot*.

According to a rabbinic tradition, God Himself wears tefillin, in which is inscribed the verse *Who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth?* (2 Samuel 7:23). See BT *Berakhot* 6a; below, pp. 677–78, n. 52.

On the significance of tefillin, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 4–6; *Zohar* 1:13b–14a, 147a, 168b; 2:43a–b (*Piq*), 162a; 3:54b, 81a, 108a, 120b, 140a (*IR*), 175b, 262a–263a, 269a–b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 235–40; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1161–65; Vol. 1, p. 96, n. 719.

57. **All these here…** All the souls of the Generation of the Desert are arrayed here in the Garden of Eden.

The verse in Numbers reads: *In this desert* יתמו (*yittammu*), *they shall come to an end, and there they shall die*. Rabbi Ilai transforms the declaration of doom into a promise of fulfillment by construing *yittamu* as *they shall become complete*. Of course, one could easily object that the verse was "intended harmfully," but Rabbi Ilai explains that it still implies something less than the ideal. If the generation had proven more worthy, they would have entered the Promised Land and encountered God face-to-face. Instead, they inhabit the desert, outside the Land. Apparently, in the Garden of Eden these souls reexperience certain aspects of the desert.

The concluding sentence refers to the daily symbolic death of members of this generation, described above (at note 27): "They… saw people digging graves and dying immediately and coming back to life in radiant, holy bodies."

58. **These two caves…** Referred to previously. (See above at notes 6, 17.) Apparently, Rabbi Ilai tells the Companions that they need not enter any more such caves, because the souls of the Generation of the Desert are elsewhere—in the Academy of Moses, seated far from his overwhelming brilliance. Moses is so humble that he has invited them there.

On the Academy of Moses, see above at notes 38–41. The full verse in Numbers reads: *The man Moses was very humble, more than any person on the face of the earth*. It is quoted slightly differently above.

For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. *Or Yaqar* remarks that its wording is problematic.

59. **From the day they began…** By now, the Companions have been exploring the Garden of Eden for a week, and they are so immersed that they have forgotten all about the mundane world. See above at note 36: "The way of mortals has been obliterated from our memory, and everything we've seen on this mountain is astounding."

60. **I will tell you the things you heard…** Rabbi Ilai explains to the Companions most of the cryptic statements that they heard from a voice within a palace (above at notes 30–31).

"The measure of the span of the engraved Explicit Name" alludes to the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH* (called the Explicit Name). According to Kabbalah, the name *YHVH* symbolizes the entire sefirotic spectrum. The pointlike י (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, while its upper tip symbolizes the hidden realm, *Keter*. The first ה (*he*), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ו (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*). The second ה (*he*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

The voice's utterance—"Bezalel is fourth of the supernal lights"—means that Bezalel was illumined by three

supernal *sefirot*: *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*. (*Da'at* is rarely mentioned in the *Zohar*; here it may be seen as taking the place of *Keter*, which is too concealed to be included.) The verse in Exodus demonstrates this: *I have filled him…* ובדעת בחכמה ובתבונה (*be-ḥokhmah uvi-tvunah uv-da'at*), *with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge*.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see Asher ben David, *Peirush Shem ha-Meforash*, 112; *Zohar* 1:162a (*ST*); 2:123b, 126b–127a, 219b; 3:4b, 10b, 65b, 66b, 91b–92a, 106a, 267b, 290b (*IZ*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 44a–45b.

61. **Whoever does not gaze…** See M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: "Whoever contemplates [or: gazes upon] four things, better for him if he had never come into the world: what is above? what is below? what was before? and what will be after?" Here, Rabbi Ilai mentions "three concealed things," apparently combining two of these questions into one. On gazing at "three things," see above, note 31.

62. **The tree of eighteen…** Rabbinic anatomy enumerates eighteen vertebrae in the spine. According to BT *Bava Qamma* 16a, "After seven years, a person's spine turns into a serpent. This refers to one who does not bow while reciting *Modim*." The prayer *Modim* ("[We] thankfully acknowledge") is part of the *Amidah* and acknowledges God's divinity, miraculous power, and eternal compassion. Traditionally, one bows at both the beginning and end of this prayer.

Here the *Zohar* draws on the comment by *Tosafot* on this Talmudic passage (*Bava Qamma* 16b, s.v. *ve-hu de-la kera*): "There are some who explain in accordance with what is said in the Midrash: that there is a bone in a person's spine from which he will be formed [i.e., resurrected] in the time to come, and that bone is so hard and strong that it cannot be burned by fire; and now that the bone turns into a serpent, it is not revived in the time to come."

See *Zohar* 2:100a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 269–71; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 87–89. On the vertebra at the base of the spinal column that does not decompose in the grave, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 28:3; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 18:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:5; *Zohar* 1:69a, 126a (*MhN*), 137a (*MhN*); 2:28b; 3:222a, 270b.

On the eighteen vertebrae, see M *Oholot* 1:8; JT *Berakhot* 4:3, 8a; BT *Berakhot* 28b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:8; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 1. For a discussion based on the history of anatomy, see Shapiro, "Talmudic and Other Ancient Concepts of the Number of Vertebrae in the Human Spine."

63. **Whoever enters two cherubim…** Rabbi Ilai explains this by referring to a passage in BT *Berakhot* 8a, in the name of Rav Ḥisda: "A person should always enter two doors into the synagogue. Do you imagine 'two doors'? Rather, say: a distance of two doors, and then pray."

By entering some distance into the synagogue—and not staying at the very back—a person demonstrates his devotion, and his prayer will be answered.

On cherubim as "doors" or openings, cf. Genesis 3:24, where the cherubim block the entrance to the Garden of Eden: *He drove out the human and placed east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life*.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 9a; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:2; *Midrash Mishlei* 8:34; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 11; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 366; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod, Berakhot* 8a, p. 5b; *Zohar* 3:8b (Vol. 7, p. 38, n. 116); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:81.

64. **'Whoever speculates' upon his prayer…** Expecting it to be fulfilled because it was offered sincerely or at length. Whoever does so will find his prayer unanswered and his wish unfulfilled.

See BT *Berakhot* 32b (and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *u-m'ayyen bah*), 54b–55a (and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *me'ayyen bah*). Cf. *Tosafot, Berakhot* 32b, s.v. *kol ha-ma'arikh*.

65. **Offering of a child…** Educating one's child or circumcising one's son is considered a perfect ritual (or sacrificial) offering.

On circumcision as a sacrificial offering, see *Zohar* 1:93a, 94b–95a; 2:66b, 255b (*Heikh*); 3:44a (*Piq*), 91a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 55 (68); Moses Alashkar, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 18. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:10; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:10; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 19:5; *Devarim Rabbah* 6:1. According to some biblical scholars, circumcision originated as a substitute for child sacrifice. See Exodus 22:28–29; Leviticus 12:2–5; 22:27; Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 32–33.

66. **El'azar, my son…** The beginning of this passage in missing, so it is unclear exactly what Rabbi El'azar had said, prompting the response by his father, Rabbi Shim'on.

"The cave" refers to the Cave of Machpelah, which Abraham originally purchased as a burial site for Sarah (Genesis 23) and in which all the matriarchs (except for Rachel) and the three patriarchs were eventually buried. See Genesis 49:31.

The description of Rachel as עיקרא (*iqqara*), "the essence," is a play on עקרה (*aqarah*), "barren," her former condition (see Genesis 29:31). Since she was essential (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), Jacob should have buried her in the Cave of Machpelah, rather than on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem, where she died while giving birth to Benjamin (see Genesis 35:16–20). However, Jacob's first wife, Leah, symbolizes the concealed realm (*Binah*), so it was fitting that she be buried within the cave; whereas Rachel was buried "outside," corresponding to the more revealed realm: *Shekhinah*. Jacob (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) was buried alongside Leah "in a single bond."

Actually, Rachel was not buried “outside” the Land, but rather within its boundaries, as stated by Jacob: *“As far me, when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the way, with still a stretch of land to reach Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath.”—which is Bethlehem* (Genesis 48:7). However, on the clause *and I buried her there*, Rashi writes: “I did not even bring her to Bethlehem, so as to bring her into the Land.” The *Zohar* is likely relying on the literal sense of this interpretation.

On Rashi’s comment, see Naḥmanides, Ḥizzequni, and Elijah Mizrahi on Genesis 48:7; Isaac Caro, *Toledot Yitsḥaq*, Genesis 48:6; Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh*, Genesis 48:7; Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz, *Vavei ha-Ammudim, Ammud ha-Emet* 23:15; Shabbetai Bass, *Siftei Ḥakhamim*, Genesis 48:7; Sassoon, ed., *Moshav Zeqenim*, Genesis 48:7; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 35:19, n. 85; 48:7, n. 58. Cf. Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 44–45; and the commentary attributed to Asher ben Yeḥiel in *Hadar Zeqenim*, 14b (on Genesis 35:19).

On the question of why Rachel was not buried in the Cave of Machpelah, see *Zohar* 1:222b–223a; Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 44–45. On *aqarah*, “barren,” and *iqqara*, “essence,” see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 71:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:8, 11; *Zohar* 1:29a–b, 50a, 149b, 154a, 157b, 158b, 165a–b (*ST*); 2:44a, 169b; 3:92a. On the sefirotic symbolism of Rachel and Leah, see also *Zohar* 1:152a (*ST*), 153a–154b, 157b–158b; 2:29b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 97–98; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 66 (83); idem, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 41.

The clause “according to what אוליפת (*olifat*), you have learned,” can also be rendered “according to what I have taught.” See Vol. 5, p. 428, n. 674.

67. **When Jacob died…** He was buried in the Cave of Machpelah alongside Leah “in a single bond”—just as

Abraham was buried alongside Sarah, and Isaac alongside Rebekah. Rabbinic tradition adds that Adam and Eve were also buried there. Based on this tradition, the *Zohar* teaches that the cave of Machpelah leads to the Garden of Eden, which may explain why it is discussed here in *Rav Metivta*.

See above, note 6. On Adam's selecting his burial site, cf. *Zohar* 1:57b. On the interaction between Eve and Sarah, cf. *Zohar* 1:128a–b (Vol. 2, p. 223, n. 150).

68. **When Abraham died...** He was buried alongside Sarah. Then eventually Isaac was buried alongside Rebekah, and Jacob alongside Leah.

69. **As for their arrangement...** From the right side of the cave to the left (if oriented as one enters the cave), the four couples were buried in the following order: Adam and Eve, Sarah and Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah, Leah and Jacob. According to this arrangement, "women (lay) alongside women," although the description "men alongside men" applies only to Abraham and Isaac, not to Adam and Jacob.

On the arrangement of the graves in the Cave of Machpelah, see JT *Ta'anit* 4:2, 68a (and commentaries, ad loc.); Libowitz, *Peni'el*, 122–25; Dendrovits, "Avot Derekh Hessev Hem Qevurim." For another interpretation of this and the following paragraphs, see *Ateret Tsevi*.

70. **In the Book of King Solomon...** According to this ancient source, the four couples were buried as follows from the right side of the cave to the left: Adam and Eve, Sarah and Abraham, Jacob and Leah, Rebekah and Isaac. This arrangement is more fitting because it is not customary for the son (Isaac) to be buried alongside his father (Abraham), as in the previous arrangement.

One might object that still the grandson (Jacob) is buried next to his grandfather (Abraham). However, this problem is overridden by the fact that Jacob (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) should be in the middle, with Abraham (symbolizing

Ḥesed) toward the right, and Isaac (symbolizing *Gevurah*) on the left.

On Jacob's corpse being flanked by Abraham and Isaac, cf. *Zohar* 1:235b. On the phrase "men alongside men," see the preceding note.

The Book of Solomon is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. For other references to this book, see *Zohar* 1:7b, 13b, 225b; 2:67a, 70a (*RR*), 125a, 139a, 172a, 204b; 3:10b, 65b, 70b, 78b, 104a, 151b, 193b, 263b (*Piq*), 295b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 12b (*MhN*). Cf. 1 Kings 11:41. Naḥmanides several times refers to, and quotes from, an Aramaic version of the Apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*. See the introduction to his Commentary on the Torah, 5–6; idem, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:163, 182; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 63–65. On the numerous scientific and magical books attributed to King Solomon, see Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:956–57.

See Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 25; and the comment by Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, on *Zohar* 1:7a: "All such books mentioned in the *Zohar*… have been lost in the wanderings of exile…. Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the *Zohar*." For a catalogue of these books, see Neuhausen, *Sifriyyah shel Ma'lah*.

71. **as they were buried…** In the same arrangement they will be resurrected in the messianic era. Leah, symbolizing the concealed realm (*Binah*), will rejoice with Messiah, son of David, within Jerusalem. (David was descended from Leah's son Judah.) Rachel, symbolizing the more revealed realm (*Shekhinah*) will rejoice with Messiah, son of Joseph, outside of Jerusalem. (Joseph was Rachel's son.)

According to a rabbinic tradition, the secondary messianic figure Messiah, son of Joseph, will precede Messiah, son of David; and he will die heroically in battle with the enemies of God and Israel before the ultimate

triumph of Messiah, son of David. See BT *Sukkah* 52a; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 40:11; *Sefer Zerubbavel* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:54–57); below at note 118.

72. **...all of pearls and precious stones** The beginning of this passage is missing both in the manuscripts and printed editions. Two spiritual messengers are describing to Rabbi Shim'on the Heavenly Temple and the future coming of the Messiah. On the two messengers, see below at note 134.

In this description the Garden of Eden is assimilated to the restored Temple in Jerusalem or the idealized Temple in Heavenly Jerusalem. This accords with the midrashic tradition that "the gate of the Garden of Eden is adjacent to Mount Moriah." See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 20; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:6.

73. **Among all those towers...** The central tower in the Heavenly Temple is engraved with a verse from Proverbs, explained here by the Head of the Heavenly Academy.

Shekhinah (known as Assembly of Israel) is pictured as *the name of YHVH*, revealing His presence to the world. She is also *a tower of strength*. *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) constantly desires to unite with *Shekhinah*, to run into this *tower*. Obviously, according to the simple sense of the verse, it is *the righteous one* who *is secure*, but the Head of the Academy indicates that the *tower* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) *is secure*—meaning that She will not fall again, as She did (metaphorically) when the Temple was destroyed.

See BT *Berakhot* 4b: "נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל (*Nafelah lo tosif qum betulat yisra'el*), *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel* (Amos 5:2)....—נפלה ולא תוסיף לנפול עוד (*Nafelah ve-lo tosif linpol od*), *She has fallen*, and *She will not* fall *again*. *Qum betulat yisra'el, Rise, O Virgin Israel!*" See Vol. 6, p. 388, n. 366.

The verse in Proverbs reads: *The name of YHVH is a tower of strength; the righteous one* בו ירוץ (*bo yaruts*), *runs into it* [or: *runs in it*], ונשגב (*ve-nisgav*), *and is secure* [literally:

and is elevated]. Here the Head of the Academy associates with ירוץ (*yaruts*), *runs*, with רצון (*ratson*), "desire," by mentioning the Aramaic word רעותיה (*re'uteih*), "his desire."

On the tower, see below, note 80. On the verse in Proverbs and *Shekhinah* as *a tower of strength*, see *Zohar* 1:37b, 96b, 209b. Cf. 1:9a. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

74. **Rabbi Kruspedai...** His illness and his heavenly visions are described in *ZḤ* 80b–c (*MhN, Rut*).

Here Rabbi Kruspedai offers a related interpretation of the verse in Proverbs. The *tower* still symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is also *the name of YHVH*. He adds that this *tower* is the תיבה (*teivah*), "pulpit," or elevated reading desk, on which is placed the Torah scroll, which is pictured as *strength*. Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who is "placed on" *Shekhinah*.

The earthly *heikhal* (ark) corresponds to "the inner *heikhal*," which here may signify the abode of the Messiah, as in [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 269 (132). Alternatively, "the inner *heikhal*," refers to *Binah*, from whom emerges *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Torah. The *tower* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is the image of *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), and its six steps represent six aspects of *Shekhinah* or Her six camps of angels.

In classic rabbinic literature, the term תיבה (*teivah*) means "ark, chest," but here it refers to the "pulpit," or elevated reading desk. (The pulpit is commonly known as בימה [*bimah*], derived from Greek *bema*, "raised platform," which itself may have derived from the Phoenician cognate of Hebrew במה [*bamah*], "high place, cult site.") In medieval Spain the pulpit was a wooden platform placed high above the ground on columns. As here in the *Zohar*, it was called מגדל (*migdal*), "a tower." In fact, already in Nehemiah 8:4, the term *migdal* signifies a (wooden) platform from which the Torah was read publicly.

The term היכל (*heikhal*) means "temple, sanctuary, palace, chamber," and in medieval Sephardic usage also "ark,"

which was sometimes a special small room attached to the synagogue. See *Zohar* 3:134a (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 370, n. 179. On these various terms, see Narkiss, “The Heikhal, Bimah, and Teivah in Sephardi Synagogues”; Assis, “Synagogues in Medieval Spain,” 18; Rodov, “Tower-like Torah Arks, the Tower of Strength and the Architecture of the Messianic Temple,” 75–86.

The concluding sentence refers to six steps leading to the pulpit, which correspond to the six steps leading to Solomon’s throne (1 Kings 10:19), which symbolizes *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 2:206a; *Miqdash Melekh*; Abraham Gombiner, *Magen Avraham, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 150:6.

On Torah as *strength* (based on Psalms 29:11), see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; 19:16; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 343; BT *Zevaḥim* 116a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; 2:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:4; 21:2. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

75. ***The righteous one runs into it…*** If *it* refers to the *tower*, then *the righteous one* is the *ḥazzan* of the synagogue, who leads the prayers at the *teivah* (elevated reading desk), which is called *a tower*. He symbolizes *Yesod*, known as Righteous One. If *it* refers to the Torah scroll, then whoever “runs” (i.e., reads fluently) in this scroll in the synagogue must be *righteous*, again corresponding to *Yesod*.

In rabbinic literature, the term “*ḥazzan* of the synagogue” refers to the official who performs various duties there. In post-Talmudic times, the term *ḥazzan* refers specifically to one who chants the prayers. On “running” as “reading fluently,” see Habakkuk 2:2. As mentioned above (note 73), the verse in Proverbs reads: *The name of YHVH is a tower of strength; the righteous one* בו ירוץ (*bo yaruts*), *runs into it* [or: *runs in it*], *and is secure*.

76. **Of all of them…** Of the seven people called up to chant from the Torah, the sixth corresponds to the sixth of

the seven lower *sefirot*: *Yesod*, known as Righteous One.

77. **all his life he ascended only sixth…** Rabbi Kruspedai insisted on always being called up as the sixth one to the Torah. As this *righteous one* chanted from the scroll, he read fluently, his words "running" *in it*. See above, note 75.

Based on this account, it was considered a great honor to receive the sixth *aliyyah*. Ḥayyim Vital writes about his teacher, Isaac Luria: "I also saw that on every Sabbath day he would go up to the Torah only as the sixth one." See *Sha'ar ha-Kavvanot* 2:92b; cf. ibid. 1:317a–b (both citing the tradition about Rabbi Kruspedai). See also Abraham Gombiner, *Magen Avraham, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 282:9.

78. **From fear of the Angel of Death…** As evidenced by Rabbi Kruspedai, who lived to an old age. See *Zohar* 80b–c (*MhN, Rut*). For the full verse in Proverbs, see above, note 75.

79. **In the tower rising…** The spiritual messenger continues his description. (See above, note 72.) A bird comes and takes this tower, setting it in the middle of the courtyard of the Heavenly Temple.

On the tower, see above, note 73. On the tower as a pulpit or elevated reading desk, see above, note 74. The placement of the tower in the middle of the courtyard corresponds to the placement of the pulpit in the middle of the synagogue. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefillah* 11:3; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 150; and Moses Isserles's animadversion to Joseph Caro, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 150:5.

80. **Three hundred openings…** In that tower.

According to Deuteronomy 31:10–13, every seven years on the festival of *Sukkot, this Torah* (referring to portions or all of Deuteronomy) was to be read publicly. The Mishnah (*Sotah* 7:8) stipulates that the king of Israel should perform the reading, consisting of various passages from Deuteronomy. Here, the *Zohar* indicates that the king was

to read specifically "the portion הקהל (*Haqhel*), Assemble," which refers to Deuteronomy 31:10–13 itself. Furthermore, "the king of Israel" now refers to King Messiah, who chants from the heavenly, radiant Torah scroll.

The association of the number three hundred with the tower recalls the Talmudic passage (BT *Ḥagigah* 15b, *Sanhedrin* 106b), where the phrase *counter of the towers* (Isaiah 33:18) is interpreted as: "one who counted three hundred fixed laws concerning a tower flying in the air." This obscure image apparently refers to a tower-shaped chest or vehicle (perhaps not directly touching the ground but supported by posts). The three hundred laws are related to the ritual purity or impurity of the contents of the "tower."

On the flying tower, see *Zohar* 1:6a; 2:91a, 102a (Vol. 5, pp. 54–55, n. 157); *ZḤ* 58a, 66a–b (*ShS*), 70a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 89–90 (112–14). On the messianic implications of the tower, see *Zohar* 1:6a (Vol. 1, pp. 36–37, nn. 251–52), and below.

81. **O holy, pious one!...** The spiritual messenger addresses Rabbi Shim'on, describing how King Messiah will chant from the Torah and explain its deeper meaning. When Rabbi Shim'on eventually asks questions about many of these secrets, answers will be provided.

On holy days, the souls dwelling in the Academies of the earthly Garden of Eden ascend to the Heavenly Academy, headed by Metatron. See above, note 43; p. 31, n. 79; below, note 245.

On the Torah in the time of the Messiah, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 98:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 13:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:8; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:367–68); *Pesiqta Ḥadta* (*Beit ha-Midrash* 6:47); *Zohar* 3:23a; Idel, *"Torah Ḥadashah."*

82. **this aperture opens...** The middle opening of the tower, mentioned above at note 80.

83. **in four colors of the supernal world…** White, red, green, and blue, corresponding respectively to *Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tif'eret*, and *Shekhinah*.

On protruding and sparkling letters, see *Zohar* 2:209b, 212a, 218b; 3:170b, 173a; *ZḤ* 67d (*ShS*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 271 (132), 282 (135), 289 (137). The phrase "can endure them" renders למיקם בהו (*le-meiqam beho*), which can also be translated: "can fathom them."

84. **that tower flies…** On the image of a flying tower, see above, note 80. On "the rest of the towers," see above at note 73.

85. **When King Messiah will ascend…** The tower. When he begins to chant from the radiant Torah scroll, a dove will emerge.

This dove, who now plays a messianic role, is the very same one sent out by Noah from the ark: *He sent out the dove to see whether the waters had abated from the surface of the ground*. According to the *Zohar*, by specifying *the dove*, Scripture alludes to this "renowned" bird, who went forth on her mission for Noah from this heavenly tower.

On the messianic role of the dove, cf. Mark 1:9–11 (and parallels in Matthew and Luke): "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. When he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens open and the spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven: 'You are my beloved son; with you I am very pleased.'"

Cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 15a, in the name of Ben Zoma: "I was gazing between the upper waters and the lower waters, and there is merely three fingers' breadth between them—as is said: *and the spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters* (Genesis 1:2)—like a dove hovering over her young without touching them."

86. ***and she did not return to him again…*** The first time that Noah sent the dove, *she found no resting place for*

her foot and she returned to the ark, for there was water over all the earth (Genesis 8:9). The second time (seven days later), *the dove came back to him toward evening and, look, a plucked olive leaf was in its bill, and Noah knew that the waters had abated from the earth* (ibid., 11).

The following verse reads: *He waited still another seven days and sent out the dove, and she did not return to him again*. According to the *Zohar*, having completed her mission, the dove returned to the heavenly tower, waiting there for her messianic role.

The crown hovers just above the Messiah's head, or barely touches his hair. The phrase מטי ולא מטי (*matei ve-la matei*), "touching yet not touching," appears elsewhere in the *Zohar* to describe the highest stages of emanation. See *Zohar* 1:15a, 16b, 65a; 2:268b (*Heikh*). See also 2:72a (*RR*).

On the messianic significance of the verse in Psalms, see *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 7; *Midrash Tehillim* 21:2; *Shemot Rabbah* 8:1.

87. **King Messiah descends...** From high in the tower to its bottom level. The dove removes the crown from the Messiah's head and returns it to its place in the middle opening of the tower.

88. **King David...** The progenitor of the Messiah is called *a verdant olive tree*, while the Messiah himself is David's offshoot: *an olive leaf*. In the aftermath of the Flood, the dove plucked *an olive leaf*, signifying a wreath, to crown the Messiah.

According to a midrashic tradition, the dove brought the olive leaf from the Garden of Eden. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:6; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 31:10; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:15; 4:1. The full verse in Genesis reads: *The dove came back to him toward evening and, look,* עלה זית טרף (*aleh zayit taraf*) *a plucked olive leaf, was in her bill* [or: *mouth*], *and Noah knew that the waters had abated from the earth*.

89. **Why is it written טרף (*taraf*), *he plucked*…** As mentioned in the previous note, the verse reads: *The dove came back to him toward evening and, look,* עלה זית טרף (*aleh zayit taraf*) *a plucked olive leaf, was in her mouth*. Although in this verse the word *taraf* functions as an adjective (*plucked*), the *Zohar* construes it here as a masculine verb: *he plucked* [*an olive leaf*].

In the Heavenly Academy, it was taught that the dove (sent by Noah) was masculine; but since the word יונה (*yonah*), "dove," is normally feminine, elsewhere in this biblical passage it appears with feminine verbs and suffixes, whereas here it appears with a masculine verb—*taraf, he plucked, an olive leaf*—befitting the valiant act of obtaining this messianic leaf.

The formulation "Yet since it is called *yonah*, it is sometimes written as feminine and sometimes as masculine" derives from Rashi on this verse. Cf. Ibn Ezra, David Kimḥi, and Naḥmanides. On the Heavenly Academy, see above, note 43.

90. **When this tower returns to its place…** After King Messiah reads from the Torah. See above at notes 80–87.

The full verse in Psalms (recording God's promise to King David) reads: *His seed shall be forever, and his throne like the sun before Me*.

91. **Small letters and great letters…** On these two sets of letters, see *Zohar* 1:3b, 159b; 2:132a, 174a, 180b, 205b, 228b; 3:2a, 220a; *ZḤ* 65d (*ShS*), 66c (*ShS*), 74c–d (*ShS*).

92. **O holy, pious one!…** Again, the spiritual messenger addresses Rabbi Shim'on. See above, note 81.

On seeing letters momentarily in the morning sky, see *Zohar* 2:130b. Cf. 2:57a, 112b, 188a. Genesis 1:2 reads in full: *The earth was waste and empty, with darkness over the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters*. The following verse may be implied here as well:

God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. Genesis 1:6 reads in full: *God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water."*

93. **O holy, pious one!...** This paragraph and the next are out of place and fit better with the material appearing below at notes 107–16. See *Yahel Or*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

Whoever guards the covenant of circumcision by avoiding sexual sin places himself behind *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness), who leads the way for him. Meanwhile, "who protects him from behind?" None other than *Yesod*, known as Righteous One.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. On Righteous One and Righteousness, see *Zohar* 1:32a (*Tos*), 34a, 49a, 182b, 246a; 2:57a, 147b, 169b; 3:26a, 68a, 69a, 105a, 115b, 236b, 287a, 291a (*IZ*), 297a.

94. **Therefore all males of Israel...** Should appear at the Temple in Jerusalem during the three pilgrimage festivals. See Exodus 23:17: *Three times a year all your males shall appear in the presence of the Lord YHVH*.

The Divine Father is *Yesod*, while the Mother is *Shekhinah*. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *After YHVH your God shall you go* [or: *walk*], *and Him shall you revere, and His commands shall you keep, and His voice shall you heed, and Him shall you worship, and to Him shall you cleave*.

95. **When that heaven...** Above the Garden of Eden or the Temple. On the relation between these two realms, see above, note 72.

According to ancient philosophy, the heavenly spheres generate harmonious music as they move. See Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 15; *Zohar* 1:41b (*Heikh*), 161b (*ST*), 233b–234a (*Tos*); 2:196a, 211a; 3:209a; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 271–72 (132). Cf. BT *Yoma* 20b; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 9.

96. **Whoever is within...** The Garden, or the Temple. See above, note 72. On the two verses in Psalms, see

Midrash Tehillim 100:3; *Zohar* 3:56a, 118a.

97. **One spring of water…** As described by Ezekiel in his vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem. See Ezekiel 47:1: *He* [namely Ezekiel's angelic guide] *led me back to the entrance of the Temple, and, look, waters were issuing from below the platform of the Temple eastward—since the Temple faced east—and the waters were running out under the south wall of the Temple, at the south of the altar*. Cf. Joel 4:18; Zechariah 14:8 (quoted below at note 226).

98. **calyx and blossom all around…** The phrase "calyx and blossom" derives from the biblical description of the lampstand in the Tabernacle. See Exodus 25:33, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:131a (*IR*), 154a, 170b, 172b, 209a.

99. **The significance of the fashioning…** The reference to שבכין (*sevakhin*), "latticework, meshwork," derives from the description of Solomon's Temple, which mentions שבכים (*sevakhim*), "meshwork," surrounding the capitals of the two columns in the Temple. See 1 Kings 7:17; below at note 226; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 283 (135). On the original placement of this *Zohar* passage, see *Or Yaqar*; *Yahel Or*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

100. **In the middle of the courtyard…** Of the restored Temple. See above, note 94.

101. **On the south side of this courtyard…** The image of waters that are knee-deep derives from Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

See Ezekiel 47:2–5 (following the verse quoted above, note 97): *He led me out by way of the northern gate and led me around to the outside of the outer gate facing east; and, look, the waters were gushing from under the south wall. As the man went on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and led me across the waters—waters that were ankle deep. Then he measured off another thousand and led me across the waters—waters that were knee-deep. He measured off*

another thousand and led me across waters that were up to the waist. He measured off another thousand—a stream that I could not cross; for the waters had swollen into swimming waters, a stream that could not be crossed.

102. **until they enter the Wadi of Shittim…** The Wadi of Acacias, apparently the lower part of the Kidron valley, extending through the Judean desert toward the Dead Sea. See Joel 4:18: *On that day, the mountains shall drip with wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the watercourses of Judah shall flow with water; a spring shall issue from the House of* YHVH *and shall water the Wadi of Shittim*.

Here, based on midrashic sources, the Wadi of Shittim is associated with the infamous place called Shittim (Acacia trees), whose full name is Abel Shittim (Brook of the Acacias), northeast of the Dead Sea. This was Israel's last stop on their trek through the desert, where many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites died in a plague, aside from those who were slain by the Israelite officers.

According to the Midrash, the Israelite men became lustful because they drank from the waters of the Brook of Shittim. When the Messiah comes, the waters issuing from the Temple will renew the Wadi of Shittim, washing away all traces of depravity. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Terumah* 9, *Balaq* 26; *Tanḥuma, Terumah* 9, *Balaq* 17; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:22; *Zohar* 3:270b (*Mat*); *ZḤ* 78b (*MhN, Rut*).

103. **Therefore these waters are in the courtyard…** Of the Temple, for the sake of those who come there on pilgrimage. See above, note 94. The text seems to switch between describing what happened at the Temple in the past and what will happen in the messianic era.

104. **He said…** Namely, the Head of the Academy.

The "branch" is apparently from the Tree of Life, and so its fruit will provide immortality. Cf. the interpretation of the

verse from Zechariah in BT *Pesaḥim* 68a (in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan): "The righteous are destined to revive the dead, as is said: *There shall yet be old men and women in the squares of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of his great age* (Zechariah 8:4), and it is written: *Place my staff on the lad's face* (2 Kings 4:29)." This last verse is spoken by Elisha to his attendant Gehazi, instructing him how to revive the dead son of the Shunammite woman.

See *Zohar* 1:114b (*MhN*), 135a (*MhN*); *Or Yaqar*; David Luria's comment on *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 36, n. 45; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

105. **it appears blue…** Symbolizing *Shekhinah*. Red symbolizes *Gevurah*; green, *Tif'eret*; and white, *Ḥesed*.

106. **The dew flowing…** The dew feeds the spring, which waters the branch, generating the fruit of immortality.

The association of dew with reviving the dead appears in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Yehudah said, '… In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *Your dead will live… my corpses will arise*. … *Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust!… For Your dew is a dew of lights… and the earth will cast forth spirits of the dead*. …' (Isaiah 26:19).' Rabbi Tanḥum said, '… From where does it descend? From the head of the blessed Holy One. In the time to come, He will shake the hair of His head and bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake…. For my head is filled with dew* (Song of Songs 5:2).'" See below, note 189.

107. **All those who preserve the holy covenant…** According to the verse in Exodus, *Three times a year all* זכורך (*zekhurekha*), *your males* [literally: *your maleness* or *your male qualities*], *shall appear in the presence of the Lord YHVH*. Here the *Zohar* indicates that *zekhurekha, your maleness*, refers to the phallus—specifically to those who are "members of the holy covenant" of circumcision and

who preserve that covenant by avoiding sexual sin, thereby maintaining sexual purity.

The Head of the Academy explains why the verse employs the unusual term זכורך (*zekhurekha*), *your males* [or: *your maleness*], instead of the normal form זכרך (*zekharekha*), *your males*. This is because *zekhurekha* implies זכור (*zakhur*), *remembering* (Psalms 103:14), or זכור (*zakhor*), *remember* (as in Exodus 20:8). Anyone who preserves sexual purity will be remembered and protected by God. On the verse in Exodus, see above, note 94; *Zohar* 2:124a, 183a.

108. **Why three times?...** The three pilgrimage festivals correspond to the three patriarchs, who first accepted the covenant of circumcision.

As explained above (note 44), whereas Abraham completed only the first stage of circumcision (cutting and removing the foreskin), Jacob also underwent פריעה (*peri'ah*), "uncovering" the corona; so he is described as איש תם (*ish tam*), *a complete man*. In kabbalistic terms, Abraham symbolizes *Ḥesed* (on the right), Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah* (on the left), and Jacob symbolizes the more complete realm of *Tif'eret* (balancing right and left).

On the specific sefirotic correspondences of the various festivals, see *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1238–40; Vol. 8, pp. 116–17, n. 186.

109. **Abraham was called תמים (*tamim*), *wholehearted*...** Because he was circumcised; but not having undergone *peri'ah* ("uncovering" the corona), he was not called תם (*tam*), *complete*, like Jacob. See the preceding note, and above, note 44.

According to midrashic tradition, Noah was born circumcised (i.e., without a foreskin); so, like Abraham, he is described as *tamim, wholehearted*—unlike the rest of Noah's generation who acted corruptly, committing sexual sins.

The concluding clause—"since they corrupted their ways"—is based on Genesis 6:12: *God saw the earth and, look, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on*

the earth. On the sexual implication of *corrupted its ways*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 28:8; BT *Sanhedrin* 57a, 108a; *Avodah Zarah* 23b; *Ḥullin* 23a; *Bekhorot* 57a, *Temurah* 28b; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 18; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 10, p. 190; *Midrash Tehillim* 26:7; 53:1; *Kallah Rabbati* 2:7; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 6:12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:4; *Zohar* 1:61b–62a, 68a.

On Noah's being born circumcised, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 11, *Noaḥ* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 6; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:7; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 6:9; *Zohar* 1:58a–b, 59b, 246a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 161.

For the full verse in Genesis 17, see above, note 44. The full verse in Genesis 6 reads: *These are the offspring of Noah—Noah was a righteous man; he was wholehearted in his generation; Noah walked with God*.

110. ***Noah walked with God…*** Through circumcision and avoiding sexual sin, a male becomes *tamim, wholehearted*, and then is *with God*.

On the connection between circumcision and one's relationship with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:94a; Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 29–48.

On the rhetorical question "Now, who can walk with Him?" see BT *Sotah* 14a, in the name of Rabbi Hama son of Rabbi Ḥanina: "What is meant by the verse *After YHVH your God shall you walk* (Deuteronomy 13:5)? Now, is it possible for a human to walk after *Shekhinah*? Has it not already been said *For YHVH your God is a consuming fire* (ibid. 4:24)? However, this means to walk after the attributes of the blessed Holy One. As He clothes the naked…, so shall you clothe the naked. The blessed Holy One visited the sick…, so shall you visit the sick. The blessed Holy One comforted mourners…, so shall you comfort mourners. The blessed Holy One buried the dead…, so shall you bury the dead."

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 13:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:3; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 10; *Midrash Tehillim*

25:11. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 49; BT *Ketubbot* 111b.

111. ***Walk before Me and be tamim, wholehearted…*** This divine directive is soon followed by the covenantal command of circumcision (Genesis 17:9–14). The exact progression of the verse is soon clarified.

Genesis 17:1 reads: *Walk in My presence* [or: *before Me*] *and be tamim, wholehearted*. See above, note 44.

112. ***Walk before Me*—from here we learn…** The *Zohar* pictures *Shekhinah* (the Divine Female) saying to Abraham, *Walk before Me*. This implies that one should walk *before* a woman, not behind her (so as not to stimulate his lust). Yet the notion that *Shekhinah* follows behind seems to be contradicted by the verses in Exodus that describe *an angel* who will go *before* the Israelites, since this angel is identified with *Shekhinah*.

See BT *Berakhot* 61a: "A man should not walk behind a woman on the road—even his wife." See BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 60:14.

On the angel in Exodus as *Shekhinah*, see Naḥmanides on Exodus 23:20; *Zohar* 1:232a; 2:125a. Cf. Vol. 5, p. 171, n. 89. The full verse in Exodus 23 reads: *Here, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared*. The full verse in Exodus 33 reads: *I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite*.

113. **Abraham, who was not yet circumcised…** Before Abraham was circumcised, he went in front of *Shekhinah*—as indicated by the beginning of the verse: *Walk before Me*. Once he was circumcised and became *tamim*, he was worthy of walking behind *Shekhinah*, even though normally a man should not walk behind a woman.

When a person falls to a state of moral "deficiency," *he has turned from behind Me*—that is, he moves (or is moved) from the worthy position of being behind *Shekhinah* to being in front of Her.

The verse in Samuel reads: *I regret that I made Saul king, for* שב מאחרי (*shav me-aḥarai*), *for he has turned back from Me, and My words he has not fulfilled*. Here, the phrase *shav me-aḥarai* is construed as *he has turned from behind Me*. For various interpretations of this paragraph and the following one, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

114. **Noah was circumcised…** Because he was born circumcised, he was *tamim*, *wholehearted*, and deserved to walk *with God*, which is greater than walking in front of God. However, since he did not undergo *peri'ah* ("uncovering" the corona), he was not worthy enough to walk behind God, nor could he gaze upon Him. On Noah's being born circumcised, see above, note 109.

115. **Of Israel is written…** As the Israelites were leaving Egypt, they were worthy enough for God to go *before them*. But when they were trapped at the Red Sea with the Egyptians right behind them, they lost faith and complained bitterly. This weakened the Divine Mind and caused *Shekhinah* (*the angel of God*) to move *from before the camp of Israel* to a position *behind them*.

On Israel's effect on God, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:33, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon: "When the people of Israel enact the will of the Omnipresent, they strengthen heavenly power, as is said: *In God we generate strength* (Psalms 60:14). When the people of Israel do not enact the will of the Omnipresent, they weaken, as it were, the great power of the One above, as is written: *The Rock that bore you*, תשי (*teshi*), *you weakened* (Deuteronomy 32:18)."

The word *teshi* derives from the root נשה (*nshh*), "to forget," and the simple meaning of the verse in Deuteronomy is: *The Rock that bore you, you forgot*. However, according to this midrashic reading, the word means *you weakened*, based on the root תשש (*tshsh*), "to be weak."

On the radical notion of weakening God, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 319, 346; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:12; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:33; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:6; 25:1; *Zohar* 1:57b, 234b; 2:32b, 64a, 65b, 155b; 3:18b, 22a, 75b, 299a.

On the tragic consequences of Israel's lack of faith at the Red Sea, see Al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or* 4:42–30: "One should never open his mouth for Satan, lest his sin bring about the fulfillment of his words for evil [i.e., one should never utter ominous words, thereby providing an opening for Satan and inviting disaster].... The Generation of the Desert said, *You took us to die in the desert* (Exodus 14:11); and so it was decreed upon them, as is said: *In this desert they shall come to an end, and there they shall die* (Numbers 14:35)."

The saying "One should never open his mouth for Satan" appears in BT *Berakhot* 19a, 60a; *Ketubbot* 8b (in the names of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish and Rabbi Yose).

The full verse in Exodus 13 reads: *YHVH was going before them by day in a column of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a column of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and by night*.

Exodus 14:11–12 reads: *They said to Moses, "Is it for lack of graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the desert? What is this you have done to us to, bringing us out of Egypt? Isn't this what we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone, that we may serve Egypt, for it is better for us to serve Egypt than for us to die in the desert'?"*

Exodus 14:19 introduces the description of the splitting of the Red Sea (14:19–21): *The angel of Elohim, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them, and the column of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the dark, and it lit up the night—and one did not draw near the other all night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and YHVH drove the sea with a mighty east wind all*

night, and He turned the sea into dry ground, and the waters were split.

116. **to wreak vengeance upon them** This could be construed as an alternative interpretation to the one offered in the preceding paragraph, implying instead that *"the angel moved* to wreak vengeance upon" the Egyptians. See *Yahel Or* (on 3:165a); *Matoq mi-Devash*.

Or, conceivably, it means that *"the angel moved* to wreak vengeance upon" the faithless Israelites, even though this contradicts the narrative in Exodus. See the passage from *Menorat ha-Ma'or* quoted in the preceding paragraph.

117. **... Over this the Messiah rejoiced...** This paragraph and the next are out of place and fit with the passage below at note 277. See *Yahel Or* (on 3:165a); Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

According to the book of Daniel, at a lavish banquet King Belshazzar of Babylon became very frightened when he saw a disembodied human hand writing certain words on the plaster of the wall of his palace. After none of the king's wise men could read or interpret the writing, the queen suggested that Daniel be summoned. He proceeded to read the words as מנא מנא תקל ופרסין (*Mene mene teqel u-pharsin*), which he interpreted for the king. See Daniel 5:5, 24–28.

The last word—*u-pharsin*—is a dual form of פרס (*peres*), a unit of weight: one-half of a mina, or of a shekel. Daniel interprets it verbally as *perisat, has been divided*, and apparently also as alluding to the Persians: *Peres—your kingdom perisat, has been divided, and given to the Medes* ופרס (*u-pharas*), *and the Persians*.

In the concluding sentence, the Head of the Academy wonders how the line in Daniel applies "here," that is, to the subject of the Messiah, which was being discussed. On the verse in Daniel, see below, note 277; *Zohar* 2:198a.

118. **by another Messiah...** Messiah, son of Joseph, who will reign briefly in Jerusalem (thereby "dividing" the

foreign kingdom). Afterward, however, the king of Persia will defeat and kill him. Finally "he (the king of Persia) will fall," and Messiah, son of David, and his holy followers *will receive the kingdom*.

See *Sefer Zerubbavel* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:55–57). On Messiah, son of Joseph, see above, note 71.

119. **O holy, pious one!...** The spiritual messenger addresses Rabbi Shim'on.

On the spring, see above at notes 101–6; note 97. On the healing power of the tree's leaves, see Ezekiel 47:12; JT *Sheqalim* 6:3, 50a; BT *Sanhedrin* 100a, *Menaḥot* 98a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:13; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 18, p. 93; *Midrash Tehillim* 23:7.

120. **Happy is your share...** There are several lacunae in this paragraph. The reference to the Jordan is soon clarified.

121. **the river that issues from Eden...** As described in Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*.

As soon as the Jordan reaches the river issuing from Eden, the latter is drawn toward the Jordan and enters it.

122. **it deposits there...** In the ground of the Temple. Cf. the description of "the ground of the Garden (of Eden)" in [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 270 (132).

123. **...to their places...** This fragment is out of place. See *Yahel Or*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

124. **On that southern side...** Of the Temple.

125. **Two eagles on every single pillar...** On each of the 350 pillars.

126. **Three letters protrude…** From the mouth of one of the eagles atop each pillar. Perhaps the letters are י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*), the components of יהוה (*YHVH*).

127. **Twenty-one hundred candelabra…** Six for each of the 350 pillars, apparently three on each side. The description of the Temple continues below at notes 213–14.

128. **As they were sitting and discussing this…** The two spiritual messengers instruct Rabbi Shim'on to record what he has heard.

At night, every worthy spirit returns to visit her former body's grave. Then at midnight, each one flies to the Garden of Eden to delight with the blessed Holy One. The two spirits promise Rabbi Shim'on that they will return the next day "to complete the gift" of secret teachings.

On spirits' each visiting their grave, see *Zohar* 2:101b; 3:169b–170a. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 152b–153a; *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 8; *Zohar* 1:225a–226b. On the midnight scenario in the Garden of Eden, see above, p. 3, n. 6.

"Dusked" renders רמש (*remash*), an apparently Zoharic verb based on רמשא (*ramsha*), "evening." See *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:36b, 171a, 173a, 198a, 208a; 3:21a, 52b, 113b, 149a–b; *ZḤ* 7d (*MhN*), 25d (*MhN*), 28b (*MhN*).

The expression "archival tablet" renders פנקסא דאחמתא (*pinaqsa de-aḥmeta*). The rabbinic term *pinaqsa* derives from Greek *pinax*, "a wax-covered writing tablet or book." On the term *aḥmeta*, see above, pp. 2–3, n. 5.

129. ***A loving doe…*** The verse, describing one's wife, reads: *A loving doe, a graceful gazelle—let her breasts ever quench your thirst* [or: *satisfy you*; *fill you*; *refresh you*]; *lose yourself* [or: *stray*; *stagger*; *be ravished*; *intoxicated*; *infatuated*] *always in her love*.

On the application of this verse to Torah, see JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 9a; BT *Eruvin* 54b, *Ketubbot* 77b; *Midrash Mishlei* 5:19; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 57; *Midrash Tehillim* 7:3; 119:41; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:4; *Bereshit Rabbati* 49:21; *Zohar* 3:85b.

130. **placed his head between his knees…** In a meditative pose. Then he kissed the sacred dust of the Garden of Eden.

On placing one's head between the knees, see 1 Kings 18:42 (and David Kimḥi, ad loc.); BT *Berakhot* 34b, *Avodah Zarah* 17a; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 78–79; Fenton, "Rosh bein ha-Birkayim." In *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:8 and BT *Niddah* 30b, the fetus in the womb is described similarly.

131. **Do not fear, son of Yoḥai!…** The Companions encourage Rabbi Shim'on to record the secrets that he has heard.

See above at note 128. On Rabbi Shim'on's title Holy Lamp, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

132. **That lamp shone…** The two spiritual messengers had instructed him to take a lamp. See above at note 128.

133. **the image of a house…** The Temple in Heavenly Jerusalem.

134. **with his head between his knees…** See above, note 130.

135. **new-ancient words…** New interpretations of Torah conveying ancient wisdom. On various implications of this phrase, see Matt, "'New-Ancient Words.'"

136. **We have not been granted permission…** The two messengers are authorized to reveal only certain secrets to Rabbi Shim'on.

On moving to a new place in order to succeed, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b, quoting the verse from Genesis. Cf. BT *Bava Metsi'a* 75b, which criticizes the kind of person "who is badly off in one city and does not go to another city." The concluding sentence is clarified below at note 163. See also *Zohar* 1:187a (standard editions).

On the verse in Genesis, cf. *Zohar* 1:78a. The full verse reads: *YHVH said to Abram, "Go you forth from your land, from your birthplace* [or: *kinfolk*], *from your father's house —to the land that I will show you!"*

137. **We were ready to hear more…** From the Head of the Heavenly Academy.

138. **small matters…** That is, formulated succinctly.

139. **we have not attained this…** They did not hear the answer to this question.

140. **A spirit that moves naked…** If a person dies without having lived virtuously, his spirit lacks a garment of good deeds and is condemned to roam the upper worlds aimlessly, barred from entering the divine realm. Here, the nakedness is caused by the lack of a specific good deed, the first commandment of the Torah: procreation.

In such a case, the naked spirit can be redeemed and "(re)built" if the deceased man's brother performs levirate marriage: marrying the widowed wife, impregnating her, and consciously drawing that homeless spirit into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the spirit with another opportunity to fulfill itself on earth.

The Head of the Academy indicates that the original husband and wife constituted a single lamp. If this husband dies, his light can be rekindled by his widow through levirate marriage.

According to the biblical custom of levirate marriage, if a married man dies childless, his brother should marry the widow and then father a child who will be considered the offspring of the deceased. Posthumously providing the dead man with offspring prevents his "name" from being blotted out. In Kabbalah, levirate marriage is understood in terms of reincarnation: not only the "name" of the deceased husband is preserved but also his soul, transmigrating into the embryo generated by the union of his widow and his brother.

On levirate marriage, see Genesis 38; Deuteronomy 25:5–10; Ruth 3–4; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 231, 482–83. On the medieval context, see Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 127–74; Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious*, 90–101. The English term "levirate marriage" derives from Latin *levir*,

“husband’s brother.” The corresponding Hebrew term יבום (*yibbum*) similarly derives from יבם (*yabbam*), “husband’s brother.”

On reincarnation in Kabbalah, and the connection between levirate marriage and reincarnation, see Vol. 5, p. 38, n. 108; below, p. 174 at n. 25; p. 189 at n. 10; p. 192 at n. 16. The image of building (in the context of levirate marriage) derives from Deuteronomy 25:9. Cf. Genesis 16:2; 30:3. On levirate marriage as redemption, see Ruth 3–4.

On being naked of good deeds, see, e.g., *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 305; *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:6; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 14; *Bahir* 141 (200); *Zohar* 1:224a–b (Vol. 3, pp. 347–48, n. 252).

On nakedness and childlessness, cf. the rare biblical term עירי (*ariri*), which apparently means “stripped,” hence, “stripped of children, childless.” See Genesis 15:2; Leviticus 20:20–21; Jeremiah 22:30; *Targum Onqelos* and Rashi on Leviticus 20:20. Here, the term for “naked” is בערטורא (*be-irtura*), instead of what might be expected: בערטולא (*be-irtula*). The strange spelling *be-irtura* may be influenced by *ariri*. See Vol. 5, p. 36, n. 105; Vol. 6, p. 188, n. 236.

On “vessel” as a metaphor for wife, see BT *Sanhedrin* 22b; *Zohar* 2:99b–103b passim. Moses de León employs the same image in *Shushan Edut*, 355; *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 244; *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 34.

141. **let us return to previous matters…** This expression derives from the terminology of medieval preaching, though here it implies also that the two messengers wish to return to the Heavenly Academy where matters are being discussed. For the expression, see *Zohar* 2:97b, 272a (*Tosafot*); *ZḤ* 30c; Scholem. Cf. below at note 195.

142. **But this one will go…** Namely, one of the two spiritual messengers.

143. **I was about to enter…** He was about the enter the Heavenly Academy to obtain permission, when he saw its members sitting in a circle ("one wreath"), trying someone's case. Now, both spiritual messengers must join them there.

"Wreath" renders עטורא (*ittura*), "crowning," referring here to "a circle" in which the members of the Heavenly Academy are sitting. This image recalls the arrangement of the Sanhedrin, as described in M *Sanhedrin* 4:3: "The Sanhedrin was arranged like half of a circular threshing floor so that they could see one another." See Vol. 8, pp. 319–20, n. 4. For other descriptions of adjudication in heaven, see *Zohar* 2:6a; 3:185b. Cf. *ZḤ* 14c (*MhN*).

144. **The Head of the Supreme Academy…** He declares that a place has been reserved for the soul of Rabbi Shim'on in the celestial Garden of Eden. On the Supreme Academy, see above at note 43.

145. **within a certain palace…** In this context, the term היכלא (*heikhala*) can mean "palace, chamber."

146. **Rabbi Shim'on was saddened by this…** That he did not know the name of the accused.

The Messiah decrees that the sinner will remain suffering outside the Garden of Eden and then be tormented briefly in Hell. On the motif of an hour-and-a-half in Hell, cf. *Zohar* 1:62b (*Tos*), where the wicked are provided relief from the sufferings in Hell for this same amount of time. Cf. below at notes 225, 275–76.

147. **All this because one day…** This person realized that one of the Companions was about to stumble and fail in explaining a passage in Torah. He made sure that none of his colleagues would save the speaker from stumbling by offering a suggestion. Thereby the person committed the grave sin of humiliating someone in public—and what is worse, humiliating a devotee of Torah (as implied by the phrase "a sin of Torah").

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 58b: "Whoever publicly humiliates his fellow [literally: "blanches his face"] is as though he spills blood." Following this quote, the Talmud concludes that such a person is among those who "descend [to Hell] and do not ascend." In BT *Sanhedrin* 99a, 107a, such a sinner is classified as one who "has no share in the world-to-come." Cf. below at note 240.

The expression "even to a hairbreadth" is based on the Talmudic saying: "The blessed Holy One deals strictly with those around Him even to a hairbreadth." See JT *Sheqalim* 5:1, 48d (in the name of Rabbi Aḥa); Vol. 7, p. 214, n. 27.

148. **I asked permission...** Here, one of the two spiritual messengers is reporting to Rabbi Shim'on about having inquired on his behalf. The phrase "this question" refers to Rabbi Shim'on's question about the status of women in the Garden of Eden.

149. **Six palaces they showed me...** As mentioned above (note 145), the term היכלא (*heikhala*) can mean "palace, chamber." Of the six palaces mentioned here, only four are portrayed below. Apparently, the description of the other two has been lost.

In [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 285–87 (136), the author refers to seven such palaces or habitations (according to one manuscript, five) and then describes five of them, following which he mentions the habitation(s) of the four matriarchs (also mentioned here). The five that he describes are headed respectively by Bithiah (daughter of Pharaoh), Jochebed, Miriam, Huldah the prophetess (see 2 Kings 22), and Abigail (see 1 Samuel 25).

On the destiny of women in the afterlife, see BT *Berakhot* 17a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 4, p. 19. On the curtain, see above after note 24 and at note 29; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 282 (135).

This description of the palaces for female souls in the Garden of Eden had a lasting impact on popular devotional

Jewish literature. See Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*, 48–50, 76–85.

150. **Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh…** According to Exodus 2, Pharaoh's anonymous daughter found the baby Moses in the Nile and rescued him. Rabbinic literature identifies her with *Bithiah daughter of Pharaoh*, who is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:18. Whereas the etymology of the name בתיה (*Bityah*) is actually Egyptian (*bi.ti.t*, "queen"), the Rabbis construe it as meaning "Daughter of God," and several sources indicate that she converted to Judaism. Fitting the account here, Bithiah is said to be one of those privileged to enter the Garden of Eden while still alive.

See [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 286 (136). On Bithiah's name and her conversion, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:3; *Targum*, 1 Chronicles 4:18; BT *Megillah* 13a, *Sanhedrin* 19b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 48; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:5; *Kallah Rabbati* 3:23; *Midrash Mishlei* (ed. Buber) 31:34.

On her entering the Garden of Eden while still alive, see *Kallah Rabbati* 3:23; *Derekh Erets Zuta* 1:18; *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Steinschneider, 28b–29a. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbati* 24:34. On Bithiah, see also BT *Sotah* 12b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 7:7; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 7; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:23, 26, 30; 18:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 136:6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:1.

151. **they engage in commandments of Torah…** Generally, in medieval Jewish society, women did not engage in studying Torah; and according to BT *Berakhot* 20b, they are exempt from time-bound *mitsvot*. In the Garden of Eden, the souls of virtuous women study (if not fulfill) numerous *mitsvot*.

Before entering a human body, each soul exists in the Garden of Eden, where it is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body that it will inhabit on earth. As the soul leaves the Garden, it removes the ethereal body and prepares to put on an earthly body. Eventually, when

the soul returns to the Garden upon death, it regains the ethereal body.

Here the author may also be alluding to the related notion of a spiritual garment woven out of the good deeds that a person has performed while on earth. If so, then the males' garments shine more brightly because the men have performed many *mitsvot* from which the women were exempt.

On the ethereal body, see above, pp. 30–31, n. 78. On the garment of good deeds, see *Zohar* 1:224a–b (Vol. 3, p. 347, n. 249); 2:210a (Vol. 6, p. 197, n. 266); above, note 140.

On the medieval attitude toward women studying Torah, see, e.g., *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 835: "One does not teach a woman or a minor the depth of Talmud, the reasons for the *mitsvot*, or the secrets of Torah. However, the laws of *mitsvot* one should teach her. If she does not know the laws of Sabbath, how can she observe Sabbath? Similarly with every *mitsvah*." On the theme of "the reasons for the commandments," which plays a central role in Kabbalah, see Matt, "The Mystic and the *Miẓwot*." On female souls being engaged in Torah, cf. above at note 42.

In the original context in Isaiah, the prophet is condemning the women of Jerusalem. The verse reads in full: נשים שאננות (*Nashim sha'ananot*), *O complacent* [or: *carefree; at ease; lolling*] *women, rise, hear my voice!* בנות בטחות (*Banot boteḥot*), *O confident* [or: *unsuspecting*; *complacent*] *daughters, listen to my speech!* In rabbinic literature (as here), the verse is applied positively to the souls of virtuous women in the afterlife. See BT *Berakhot* 17a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 4, p. 19; *Zohar* 3:19b (Vol. 7, pp. 122–23, n. 369).

152. **Serah, daughter of Asher…** She is mentioned in Genesis 46:17; Numbers 26:46; and 1 Chronicles 7:30. According to rabbinic tradition, at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, the long-lived Serah identified Joseph's burial

site to Moses. But several generations earlier (as indicated here), Serah told her grandfather, Jacob, that Joseph (his long-lost son) was still alive and thriving in Egypt. As a reward for this, Serah was privileged to enter the Garden of Eden while still alive.

On Serah, see *Tosefta Sotah* 4:7 (Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 8:648); *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ, Petiḥta*; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 13:19; *Bereshit Rabbah* 94:9; BT *Sotah* 13a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:12–13; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 38; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 48; *Midrash Shemu'el* 32:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:18; *Tanḥuma, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 12; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 17, 88b; *Shemot Rabbah* 20:19; *Aggadat Bereshit* 22:1.

On her reward for informing Jacob that Joseph was still alive, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 46:17; Numbers 26:46; *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Steinschneider, 28b; *Sefer ha-Yashar*, chap. 14, pp. 242–43; *Bereshit Rabbati* 24:34; *Hadar Zeqenim*, Genesis 45:26; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 45:26, n. 88. See also *Sekhel Tov* and *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 45:26; Rashi and David Kimḥi on 2 Samuel 20:19. In *Kallah Rabbati* 3:23 and *Derekh Erets Zuta* 1:18, Serah is included in the list of those who entered the Garden of Eden while still alive.

In rabbinic literature Joseph is granted the title Righteous in recognition of his resisting the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. See Genesis 39; BT *Yoma* 35b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 93:7; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana, nispaḥim*, 460. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 5, and *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 38, which cite Amos 2:6.

153. **Jochebed, mother of Moses…** Together with the numerous other women in this palace, she chants the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15), which had originally been sung by Moses and the Israelites after the miracle at the Red Sea. Then Jochebed alone chants the verses following this song, recounting how Miriam led the women in song and dance.

On Jochebed's unique status, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:28. On her special dwelling in the Garden of Eden, see [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 286 (136).

Moses' title "the Faithful Prophet" is based on his rabbinic designation "Faithful Shepherd." See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 6; *Sifrei Zuta* 27; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; *Ester Rabbah* 7:13; *Rut Rabbah, Petiḥta* 5. See *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 7.

Exodus 15:20–21 reads: *Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang out to them: "Sing to YHVH for He has risen up triumphantly; horse and its rider He hurled into the sea!"*

154. **In the sixth palace—Deborah...** Only three palaces have been described so far. As mentioned above (note 149), the description of the other two has apparently been lost.

Along with the other women in this palace, the prophet Deborah chants the triumphal song that she sang after defeating Sisera, the commander of a Canaanite army. See Judges 4–5.

155. **four palaces of the holy matriarchs...** Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah. See [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 287 (136).

156. **[the women] are by themselves...** All day long, the female souls in the Garden of Eden remain separate from the male souls. Then at night they mingle; precisely at midnight, each female soul unites with a male soul—just as on earth the holiest time for sexual union is at midnight. See [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 287–88 (136).

157. **Palaces of Confident Daughters...** The title Confident Daughters derives from Isaiah 32:9. See above, end of note 151.

The spiritual messengers report to Rabbi Shim'on that they were not allowed to see the actual delights of the male

and female souls.

158. **If you were not the son of Yoḥai…** Rabbi Shim’on’s special status enables him to know the deepest secrets.

The union of male and female souls in the Garden of Eden generates new souls, pictured as fruit (which is greater than the bodily “fruit” a human couple engenders in this world). These brilliant souls are reserved for converts and are housed in a palace in the Garden.

See below, p. 313, n. 55; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 273 (133). Cf. *ZḤ* 53b. On souls as fruit, see *Bahir* 14 (22); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 489, 504; *Zohar* 1:15b, 19a, 33a, 59b–60a, 82b, 85b, 90b, 115a–b, 226b, 238a, 249a; 2:166b–167a, 186b, 223b; 3:43b, 97a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 51; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69). Cf. Ibn Ezra on Psalms 1:3.

On the soul as a lamp, see Proverbs 20:27: *The soul* [or: *breath, life-breath, spirit*] *of a human is the lamp of* YHVH, *searching all the inward chambers* [literally: *the chambers of the belly*].

On the souls of converts, see *Zohar* 1:13a–b, 96a; 2:27a, 87a, 95b, 98b–100a, 147b; 3:14a–b, 25b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 16, 212–13; Wijnhoven, “The *Zohar* and the Proselyte.” On their palace, see *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*).

159. **When a proselyte converts…** A convert’s soul is conveyed to earth by *Shekhinah* Herself. Therefore, he or she is called גר צדק (*ger tsedeq*), “convert of righteousness.” Traditionally, this term refers to a convert who accepts all the laws of Judaism. In the *Zohar*, it implies that such a person is linked with the rung of *Shekhinah*, who is known as צדק (*Tsedeq*), Righteousness.

The image of entering “beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*” derives from Ruth 2:11–12, where Boaz says to Ruth: *I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had not*

known before. May YHVH reward your deed, and may you have a full recompense from YHVH, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge. Based on this verse, the metaphor of coming under the wings of *Shekhinah* is used in rabbinic literature to describe conversion. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:9: "If a proselyte comes to convert, one should extend a hand to him to bring him under the wings of *Shekhinah*." See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:6; BT *Shabbat* 31a, *Yevamot* 46b.

The simple sense of the verse in Proverbs may be: *The fruit of the righteous is* (like the fruit of the) *tree of life*. Here, the Tree of Life symbolizes the Divine Male who generates souls. Similarly, virtuous souls in the Garden of Eden (pictured as fruit) generate new souls for converts.

On the term *ger tsedeq*, see BT *Yevamot* 48a–b; *Zohar* 1:13a–b, 96a; 2:27a, 70a, 87a; 3:14a–b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 340; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212. On souls as fruit, see the preceding note.

160. ***Sarai was barren, she had no child…*** The second half of the verse seems redundant, but it implies that although *she had no child*, she did bear a soul—in fact many souls.

The Head of the Academy is alluding to a midrashic treatment of another verse in Genesis (12:5), which reads in full: *Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew and all the goods they had gotten and the persons they had appointed* [or: *acquired*] *in Haran, and they set out on the way to the land of Canaan*. The clause והנפש אשר עשו (*ve-ha-nefesh asher asu*), *and the persons they had appointed* [or: *acquired*], refers literally to the slaves that Abraham and Sarah had obtained, but the Midrash interprets it hyperliterally. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:14: "*Ve-ha-nefesh asher asu, And the souls they had made, in Haran*. Rabbi El'azar said in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Zimra, 'If all the nations assembled to create a single mosquito, they could not cast a soul into it, yet you say: *and the souls they had*

made?! Rather, these are converts. Then the verse should read [*and the souls*] *they had converted*. Why *they had made?* To teach you that whoever draws a Gentile near is as though he created him.' Then the verse should read *he* [Abraham] *had made*. Why *they had made?* Rabbi Ḥunya said, 'Abraham converted the men, and Sarah the women.'"

Here the Head of the Academy takes the phrase *and the souls they had made* even more literally than the Midrash. Just as Abram and Sarai generated new souls for converts through sexual union, so do the male and female souls in the Garden of Eden.

See *Zohar* 2:147b; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 273 (133). On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:3; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 12; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; B, 26; *Zohar* 1:78b–79b, 130a (*MhN*); 2:128b, 198a; *ZḤ* 25a (*MhN*).

On the significance of the apparently redundant clause *she had no child*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 38:14; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:26, 52; BT *Yevamot* 64b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 18:3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 32, 148a; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:10.

161. **That man...** The spiritual messenger.

On special occasions the male souls ascend—as implied by the verse in Exodus, which commands Israelite males to appear at the Temple in Jerusalem during the three pilgrimage festivals. The full verse reads: *Three times a year all your males shall appear in the presence of the Lord* YHVH. See above, notes 94, 107. On women being exempt from "appearing" at the Temple on the pilgrimage festivals, see M *Ḥagigah* 1:1; *Zohar* 2:183a.

On souls of the righteous being crowned (or ascending) on new moons, festivals, and Sabbaths, see above, p. 31, n. 79.

162. **A righteous one who prospers...** Why do some of the righteous prosper and some suffer, and similarly with

the wicked?

The answer involves “the scale of the Tree”—the cosmic scales standing beneath *Shekhinah* (who is pictured as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). These scales incline toward one side or the other depending on the degree of virtue or vice in the world. When virtue dominates, the scale of righteousness tips toward holiness; when sins abound, the scale of deceit tips toward impurity. As souls leave the realm of *Shekhinah* on their way down toward bodily existence, they pass through these scales to be weighed. If, at that moment, the scales happen to be tipped toward impurity, those particular souls are condemned to a life of suffering. See *Zohar* 2:95b (Vol. 5, pp. 7–8, n. 22).

On the question of “A righteous one who prospers, a righteous one who suffers,” see BT *Berakhot* 7a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: “*Please, let me know Your ways* (Exodus 33:13). [Moses] said before Him, ‘Master of the Universe, why do some of the righteous prosper while others suffer? And why do some of the wicked prosper while others suffer?’ He replied, ‘Moses, a righteous one who prospers is righteous born of righteous; a righteous one who suffers is righteous born of wicked. A wicked one who prospers is wicked born of righteous; a wicked one who suffers is wicked born of wicked.’”

See *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 22; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 5, 93–94; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 5, p. 181; 6, pp. 182–83; *Midrash Aggadah*, Exodus 33:20; *Zohar* 1:180b; 3:218a–b, 231a.

“The balance (of the scale)” renders תיקלא (*tiqla*), based on the root תקל (*tql*), “to weigh, balance.” In the *Zohar, tiqla*’s range of meaning includes “scale, balance, potter’s wheel, hollow of the hand, fist, water-clock.” See Vol. 5, pp. 7–8, n. 22.

163. **Wood whose light does not ascend...** If one is trying to kindle wood and it does not catch fire, striking it can produce a flame. Similarly, if a righteous person’s soul

is not shining brightly, suffering caused by God can intensify the light. Then body and soul will function harmoniously and virtuously, generating radiance. See above at note 136; *Zohar* 1:187a (standard editions). Cf. *Zohar* 3:191b, 241a; *ZḤ* 89d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Joseph Gikatilla, *Sefer ha-Meshalim*, 119, §28.

164. **The Other Side seeks to do the same…** Trying to imitate God, the demonic Other Side brings suffering upon the wicked person in order to increase light for his own benefit; but the wicked one's character dooms both him and his demonic patron to darkness.

The verse in Ecclesiastes now implies that the Other Side cannot match the Divine King. The Other Side is sometimes described as אדם בליעל (*adam beliyya'al*), *a worthless man* (Proverbs 6:12). See *Zohar* 3:192a; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 46–47.

Through testing, the righteous are strengthened, as implied by the phrase *a tested stone*. The full verse in Psalm 11 reads *YHVH tests* [or: *examines, probes*] *the righteous, but the wicked and one who loves violence His soul hates*. The verse in Isaiah reads: *See, I lay in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*.

165. **O word! O word!…** Rabbi Shim'on had always yearned to understand why the righteous suffer, so now he is extremely grateful for this word of wisdom.

166. **He said to him…** The spiritual messenger tells Rabbi Shim'on that both male and female spirits ascend (on holy days) to the celestial Garden of Eden to hear "new and ancient words" of Torah. Then they descend to the Academy in the earthly Garden of Eden and repeat what they have learned before the Head of the Academy. On the phrase "new and ancient words," cf. above, note 135.

When the souls ascend, they strip themselves of the garments befitting the earthly Garden, which are "garments of that body," namely the ethereal body in which each soul is clothed. See above, note 151; pp. 30–31, n. 78.

Above (after note 141), Rabbi Shim'on had asked, "Women in that world—are they privileged to ascend on high, or what is their status there?" The spiritual messenger went on to describe the various palaces reserved for women in the afterlife. Eventually (above at note 161), he informed Rabbi Shim'on that on holy days only male souls appear before God, but now he explains that both male and female souls ascend to the celestial Garden of Eden to hear "new and ancient words" of Torah. Above (at note 42), the Companions learned that on holy days female souls approach Miriam, delving with her into divine mysteries. Below (at notes 244–45), the spiritual messenger informs Rabbi Shim'on that whenever male souls ascend, female souls ascend to the palaces reserved for women.

167. **How joyously new...** The spiritual messenger conveys a teaching from the Head of the Academy illustrating that one who humbles himself in this world is exalted "there" in the world that is coming, and vice versa.

In the verse from Genesis, the extent of Sarah's life is described as *one hundred* שנה (*shanah*), *years, and twenty* *shanah*, *years, and seven* שנים (*shanim*), *years*. Normally, *shanah* is singular ("year"), whereas *shanim* is plural ("years"); but Hebrew often employs a singular noun collectively when indicating a plural of more than ten. So in this verse, שנה מאה (*me'ah shanah*) means *one hundred years*. The Head of the Academy interprets this use of the singular form *shanah* as implying that "one who is great [signified by the sum *one hundred*] is small [signified by the singular form *shanah*, *year*]." Conversely, "one who is small [signified by the small sum of *seven*] is great [signified by the plural form *shanim*, *years*]."

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85b, in the name of Rabbi Yirmeyah: "Whoever belittles himself for the sake of the words of Torah in this world is magnified in the world that is coming." See *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 38;

Zohar 1:122b (*Tos*). Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 11; BT *Eruvin* 13b.

The phrase “joyously new” renders חדתין (*ḥaddatin*), “new,” but the author may be playing on the root חדי (*ḥdy*), “to rejoice.” On new words, see above at notes 26, 135, 161–62, 166.

168. **Just then, they heard…** This passage (extending below to p. 111 at n. 171) is apparently a separate narrative fragment about some of the Companions who are walking through a celestial desert. See *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*.

The Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18) celebrates the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea and is included in the daily early morning service. See above, note 153; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. The verse from Jeremiah describes the Generation of the Desert, on which see above, note 4.

169. ***Yours, O YHVH, are the greatness…*** The early morning service includes 1 Chronicles 29:10–13 and Nehemiah 9:6–11. The Sephardic version (reflected here) includes also the conclusion of the preceding verse in Nehemiah: *May they bless Your glorious name, exalted though it is above all blessing and praise!*

170. **the whole desert covered in clouds of glory…** As mentioned above (note 168), these Companions have been walking through a celestial desert. According to rabbinic tradition, seven clouds of glory shielded Israel as they wandered through the desert. See above, note 39.

171. **the Generation of the Desert…** On this generation and their destiny, see above, note 4. On the verse in Isaiah in relation to this generation, cf. *Zohar* 1:113a–b (*MhN*).

172. **He said to him…** Rabbi Shim’on asks the spiritual messenger to enlighten him about a certain matter that eludes him. The word “naked” renders ערטירא (*artira*), which could here imply “lacking.” Cf. above, note 140.

Alternatively, *artira* means "(about which I am) disturbed." See below, note 266.

173. **The returning voice…** An echo, which seems mysterious.

174. **When the Head of the Academy descended…** From the Heavenly Academy. On this Academy, see above, note 43.

175. **There are three voices…** This list of three derives from a longer list in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "The voices of six go from one end of the world to the other, and their voices are not heard. When the wood of a tree that yields fruit is cut down, its cry goes forth from one end of the world to the other—and the voice is not heard. When the snake sheds its skin.… When a woman is divorced from her husband.… When a woman joins with her husband in the first act of intercourse.… When the infant comes forth from its mother's womb.… When the soul departs from the body.…"

Here in the *Zohar*, the cry of an infant being born is replaced by the cry of its mother in labor. On voices or words splitting the heavens, see *Zohar* 2:201a; 3:31b, 55a, 61a, 105a, 121b, 260b, 294a–b (*IZ*).

"The birthstool" renders the Zoharic neologism קלביטא (*qalbita*), which may derive from the rare rabbinic term קלבינטרין (*qal-bintarin*), apparently a corruption of Greek *klinobathrion*, "a step (or stool) placed before the bed." (Cf. Greek *klinterion*, "a small couch.") See JT *Berakhot* 3:1, 5d; *Mo'ed Qatan* 3:5, 83a; *Nedarim* 7:5, 40c; *Semaḥot* 11:10; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *qelibantirin*; Vital; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qalbita*; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1372a; and Scholem (who suggests that it derives from Greek *krabbatos*, "couch").

On the passage in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*, see David Luria, ad loc., nn. 20, 23; *Bereshit Rabbah* 6:7; 20:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:7; BT *Yoma* 20b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 14; *Midrash Shemu'el* 9:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9;

Qohelet Zuta on 1:5; *Zohar* 1:118a (*MhN*); 2:110b–111a, 265a (*Heikh*). Cf. Genesis 3:16; Isaiah 26:17; 42:14; Jeremiah 46:22.

176. **The voice of a snake is not aroused…** Except when a person strikes a blow. This sound arouses only the voice of the snake, not the voice of a woman in labor or of a person departing from the world.

Cf. *Tosafot, Sanhedrin* 11a, s.v. *bat qol*. On every species seeking its own kind, see BT *Bava Qamma* 92b: "It was taught in the Mishnah: 'Anything attached to something subject to impurity is itself subject to impurity. Anything attached to something that remains pure will itself remain pure.' It was taught in a *baraita* [a Tannaitic tradition not included in the Mishnah]: Rabbi Eli'ezer said, 'Not for nothing did the starling follow the raven, but because it is of its kind.'" See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:3; *Zohar* 1:20b, 126b, 137b, 167b; 2:111a, 141a; 3:263b (*Piq*).

177. **on the day of Rosh Hashanah…** The sound of the shofar stimulates *Binah*, pictured as the Divine Shofar, who proclaims redemption and liberation.

On the earthly and sefirotic shofars, see *Zohar* 1:114a–b; 2:81b, 184a–b; 3:38b–39a, 92b, 99a–100b, 149a; *ZḤ* 20c. On *Binah* as the shofar of liberation, see *Zohar* 2:46b; 3:6b, 92b, 266b.

178. **The snake inclines to evil…** Fittingly the snake (associated with the demonic Other Side) is aroused by the violent act of striking the ground.

179. **King Solomon didn't know this!** Rabbi Shim'on is alluding to Proverbs 30:19: *Three things are too wondrous for me, and four I cannot know: the way of the eagle in the sky, the way of the snake on a rock, the way of a ship in the heart of the sea, and the way of a man in* [or: *with*] *a young woman*. How could Solomon the Wise not know *the way of the snake on a rock*—understood here as "how the voice of the snake shedding its skin flies through the air and is hidden away in crevices"?

180. **that voice is composed of spirit…** The echoing voice consists of *ruḥa* (spirit), *nafsha* (soul), "breath of bones" (a spiritual element lingering with the bones in the grave), and "pain of flesh"—that is, the pain experienced by a woman in labor, a person dying, or a snake shedding its skin.

The clause "each one separates from the other" alludes also to the painful separation of body and soul at the moment of death. When, specifically, the voice of someone dying reaches its hiding place, it settles there. Sorcerers know how to contact that voice, "and they [namely the voice's components] convey the information" to those sorcerers, providing them with whatever they seek to know about the dead. Cf. 1 Samuel 28:3–25.

On this passage, see Meroz, "The Story in the Zohar about the Grieving Dead," 49–50. On the traumatic separation of the soul from the body, see *Zohar* 1:245a; 3:54b, 88a, 126b. The verse in Isaiah reads: *Your voice will be like a ghost's from the ground*.

On "breath of bones," cf. below, note 202. The phrase "pain of flesh" renders עצבונא דבשרא (*itsevona de-visra*). *Itsevona* (pain, painful toil) corresponds to Hebrew עצבון (*itsavon*). See Genesis 3:16: *To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase* עצבונך והרונך (*itsevonekh ve-heronekh*), *your birth pangs;* בעצב (*be-etsev*), *with pain, will you bear children."*

181. **When a person arouses a voice…** When someone shouts outdoors, the components of the three painful voices (of a woman in labor, a person dying, and a snake shedding its skin) emerge from hiding and combine into an echo. This echo lasts only as long as the person's shout. The clause "it has entered there" means that the echo has entered the crevices and holes in the earth.

182. **If I have been privileged…** Similar exclamations appear in rabbinic literature and often in the *Zohar*. See BT *Berakhot* 16a, 24b; *Shabbat* 41a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* on

6:2; *Qohelet Zuta* 5:17; *Zohar* 1:2a, 129b (*MhN*), 148b, 164b, 235b, 240a; 2:99a, 121b–122a, 193b; 3:26a, 98b, 115b, 121a, 203a, 204b, 221b; *ZḤ* 77c (*MhN, Rut*), 86c (*MhN, Rut*).

183. **O holy, pious one!...** The spiritual messenger addresses Rabbi Shim'on.

184. **What innovation was there now...** Rabbi Shim'on wishes to know what new teaching was being offered just now in the Heavenly Academy.

185. ***Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes...*** The verse records God's promise to Jacob as the aged patriarch journeys toward Egypt to reunite with his long-lost son, Joseph. It reads in full: *I Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I Myself will surely bring you up as well, and Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes*.

The Head of the Academy wonders why God's promise to Jacob includes the assurance that Joseph will close the patriarch's eyes when he dies. What joy is there in this act? He explains that the eyes represent the entire spectrum of the physical world, and as a person passes away "this world and its vision are concealed from him" and a new vista opens—the afterlife. The "shutting of the eyes" marks this transition.

See *Zohar* 1:226a. On the significance of the eye, see *Derekh Erets Zuta* 9:13 (*Derekh Erets*, ed. Higger, 7:38), in the name of Shemu'el the Small: "This world resembles a human eyeball. The white in it [i.e., the sclera] is the ocean, surrounding the whole world. The black in it [i.e., the iris] is the [inhabited] world. The pit in the black [i.e., the pupil] is Jerusalem. The visage in the pit [i.e., the reflection of one's own "face" seen in the pupil of another person's eye] is the Temple, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days and in the days of all Israel. Amen." See Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 60, 95; *Zohar* 1:97a–b (*ST*); 2:23b, 222b.

186. **the regulation of the ancient ones...** To close the eyes of one who has died.

187. **Why, of all his sons…** Why does the verse state that Joseph would be the one to close Jacob's eyes? If Scripture intended to emphasize the good news that Joseph was still alive, then the verse should promise that *you will see Joseph alive*, and not the opposite: that Joseph will shut Jacob's eyes! However, since Joseph was Jacob's most beloved son, God was informing the patriarch that Joseph would inherit his vision of this world, while Jacob would obtain vision of the world beyond.

See *Zohar* 1:226a. On Joseph's special status, see Genesis 37:3: *Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, for he was the child of his old age*.

188. **How does this benefit the dead?…** It seems more appropriate to open the eyes of one who just died, demonstrating that he will eventually be resurrected and be able to see this world once again.

189. **Surely, if all vision of this world…** In order to see and partake of the world beyond, one must lose all vision of the physical world. The contrast between the two worlds is also demonstrated by the fact that when the dead are eventually revived, all vestiges of their bodies will first be dissolved by dew, and then brand new bodies will be formed. The concluding sentence reinforces the contrast: "So it is here"—a relative closes the eyes of the departed, signifying that the vision of this world has disappeared and that new vision awaits.

Note that the spiritual messenger, conversing with Rabbi Shim'on in the Garden of Eden, speaks of "that world [beyond], in which we are."

On the dew, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Yehudah said, '… In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *Your dead will live… my corpses will arise*. … *Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust!… For Your dew is a dew of lights… and the earth will cast forth spirits of the dead*… (Isaiah 26:19).' Rabbi Tanḥum said, '… From where

does it descend? From the head of the blessed Holy One. In the time to come, He will shake the hair of His head and bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake. … For my head is filled with dew* (Song of Songs 5:2).'"

The image of leavened dough derives from the same chapter in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on: "All bodies crumble into the dust of the earth until nothing remains except a spoonful of decayed matter, and this mingles with the dust like leaven mixed with dough. In the time to come, when the blessed Holy One calls to the earth to return all the bodies deposited with it, that which has become mingled with the dust… improves and increases, and it resurrects the whole body without a blemish, like leaven that improves and increases the dough."

On the first passage in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*, see JT *Berakhot* 5:2, 9b; BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, *Shabbat* 88b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 32–33; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 19; Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 54; *Zohar* 1:118a (*MhN*), 130b–131a, 225b, 232a; 2:28b, 83a, 88a, 136b; 3:128b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 165b, 288a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 45a, 90d (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 88–89. On the second passage, see *Zohar* 1:69a, 126a (*MhN*), 137a (*MhN*); 2:28b; 3:222a, 270b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 271; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 87–89. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:9.

190. **you are clothed there in a splendid garment…** In the Garden of Eden, souls are clothed in an ethereal body. Rabbi Shim'on wonders if any person attains that unique garment while still living in this world. On the ethereal body, see above, note 151; pp. 30–31, n. 78.

191. **indeed something similar did happen…** Queen Esther was so pure and virtuous that she attained such a garment—an ethereal body. This is implied by the description *Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royalty*, which

signifies *Malkhut* (Kingdom), or *Shekhinah*, who is identified with the Holy Spirit. *Malkhut* Herself generated a spiritual garment for Queen Esther.

See BT *Megillah* 15a: *"It happened on the third day, that Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royalty* (Esther 5:1). The verse should read בגדי מלכות (*bigdei malkhut*), *royal apparel!* Rabbi El'azar said in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina, 'This teaches that the Holy Spirit enveloped her.'"

See *Megillah* 14b; *Zohar* 3:183a–b. The full verse in Esther reads: *It happened on the third day, that Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royal apparel* [literally: *royalty*], *and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, facing the king's palace, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room facing the entrance of the palace*.

192. **Mordecai, as well...** He, too, attained an ethereal body while still on earth. The fear that Mordecai instilled upon the provincial officials was due to the overwhelming splendor of his spiritual garment, not to the authority of King Ahasuerus, who had elevated Mordecai.

The full verse in Esther 8 reads: *Mordecai left the king's presence* בלבוש מלכות (*bi-lvush malkhut*), *in a royal garment, of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a cloak of fine linen and purple. And the city of Shushan cheered and rejoiced*. The full verse in Esther 9 reads: *All the officials of the provinces—the satraps, the governors, and the king's stewards—showed deference to the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen upon them*.

193. **within it the righteous are clothed as they were in this world...** The ethereal body resembles the physical body that a person had while on earth. See above, note 151; pp. 30–31, n. 78.

On the crowns of the righteous in the afterlife, see BT *Berakhot* 17a: "A pearl in the mouth of Rav: 'In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking or procreation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition; rather, the

righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*.’” See also BT *Megillah* 15b (and *Sanhedrin* 111b), in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will be a crown upon the head of every single righteous person.”

194. **When Israel received the Torah…** At Mount Sinai, the people of Israel were adorned with spiritual garments resembling ethereal bodies; but once they worshiped the Golden Calf, they were stripped of these.

See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ*, add. 1: “‘You came to Mount Sinai, and I Myself descended and spoke with you along with thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels, whom I brought down for your sake. I entrusted each and every Israelite with two angels.’ Rabbi Yoḥanan said, ‘One [angel] girded [each Israelite] with his weapon, and one placed a crown upon [each Israelite’s] head.’… Rabbi Simoi said, ‘He clothed them with [His] royal purple cloak….’ Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai said, ‘He adorned them with weapons engraved with the Ineffable Name [*YHVH*]; and as long as they possessed these, no evil could touch them—neither the Angel of Death nor anything else. As soon as they sinned [with the Golden Calf], Moses said to them: *Now take off your ornaments, and I will know what I should do with you* (Exodus 33:5). At that moment, *The people heard this evil word, and they mourned*, [*and no one put on his ornaments*] (ibid., 4). What is written? *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments* (ibid., 6).’” See above, note 27.

195. **So, too, of Joshua the high priest…** The context (Zechariah 3:1–7) reads: *He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of YHVH,* והשטן (*ve-ha-satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him. YHVH said to the Accuser, “May YHVH rebuke you, O Accuser; may YHVH, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the*

angel. [*The angel*] *spoke up and said to his attendants, "Take the filthy garments off him!" And he said to him, "See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in robes." Then I gave the order: "Let a pure diadem be placed on his head*." *And they placed the pure diadem on his head and clothed him in garments, as the angel of YHVH remained standing* [or: *stood by*]. *The angel of YHVH solemnly advised Joshua, saying, "Thus says YHVH of Hosts: If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and guard My courts, and I will let you move about among these standing here."* The conclusion implies that Joshua will be rendered fit to associate with the heavenly beings. On this passage, see *Zohar* 1:113a; 3:174b, 185b–186a, 214a.

As understood by the spiritual messenger, Joshua the high priest is apparently already in the Garden of Eden. Joshua's *filthy garments* are his physical body (decomposing in the grave), whereas his new garments are the ethereal body "of that world," namely the world beyond.

The phrase "previous words (or matters)" apparently refers to the discussion about closing the eyes of the departed. Once the vision of this world is removed, the soul can proceed to the vision of the world beyond. See above at notes 185–89.

On the need for the physical body to decompose before the spirit is clothed in an ethereal body, cf. BT *Shabbat* 152b–153a: "For all twelve months [after death], one's body endures and his soul ascends and descends; after twelve months, the body ceases to exist and the soul ascends and never again descends." See also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1.

196. ***As the angel of YHVH remained standing…*** The title *angel of YHVH* alludes to *Shekhinah*, "who stands upon the head of the righteous."

Cf. BT *Berakhot* 17a (quoted above, note 193): "In the world that is coming… the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*." See

also BT *Megillah* 15b (quoted in the same note): “In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will be a crown upon the head of every single righteous person.” On *Shekhinah* as an angel, see above, note 112.

197. **Two bodies together cannot endure…** As long as the corpse has not decomposed, the spirit cannot attain an ethereal body. Similarly, in this world, a person’s good and evil impulses each seek to dominate him and to displace the opposite impulse. On the sentence “As long as this one exists…,” cf. *Zohar* 3:88b (Vol. 8, pp. 57–58, n. 8).

198. **I am astonished…** Rabbi Shim’on is shocked by the reference to Satan in this verse. If someone as virtuous as Joshua the high priest is vulnerable to Satan even in the afterlife, then what hope is there for normal people? See *Zohar* 3:214a. For the context in Zechariah, see above, note 195.

199. **once a person is in that world…** Once a person has died and reached the world beyond.

200. **Satan’s only desire…** The spiritual messenger explains that when a virtuous person (such as Joshua the high priest) dies and his earthly body (or garment) is “thrust away” in the grave, Satan “accuses him,” to prevent the spirit “from being clothed in a pure holy garment,” namely an ethereal body. Satan feels attached to the flesh, which is his product (as explained below), and which is eliminated once the spirit is clothed in an ethereal body.

201. **as long as he is not clothed…** As long as the spirit is not clothed in an ethereal body, it visits the corpse in the grave.

202. **we visit the cemetery at the beginning of each night…** The spiritual messenger—who is *ruḥa*, “a spirit”—explains to Rabbi Shim’on why spirits continue to visit their graves, even after the flesh has decomposed. Before such decomposition, *ruḥa* visits *nafsha* (the soul), which in turn visits the body; “now,” after decomposition, *ruḥa*

continues to visit *nafsha*—or that aspect of *nafsha* that is absorbed within the bones.

On *ruḥa* visiting the grave, see above, note 128. On *nafsha* remaining in the grave with the bones, see *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*); 2:142a. Cf. the expression "breath of bones," above at note 180; and see also *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot, par. 452.

203. **The structure of the human body...** The spiritual messenger describes to Rabbi Shim'on the origin of the spiritual and physical components of the human being. *Ruḥa* (spirit) derives from *Shekhinah*, who is known as the Holy Spirit. *Nishmeta* (soul, or soul-breath) derives from *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the Tree of Life. The angelic chariots of *Shekhinah* generate the bones and members (or limbs) of the body. The phrase "from their side" means "from the side of the chariots."

The three aspects of the soul are called in Hebrew *nefesh* (soul), *ruaḥ* (spirit), and *neshamah* (soul, or soul-breath), and in Aramaic *nafsha, ruḥa*, and *nishmeta*, respectively. Kabbalistic literature offers various (and differing) descriptions of their origin. Here, the spiritual messenger does not mention the origin of *nafsha*.

On *neshamah* as issuing from *Tif'eret*, and *ruaḥ* from *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:81a–b (*ST*); 2:99b. On the three aspects of soul, see also *Zohar* 1:62a, 83a–b, 205b–206a, 224b–225a; 2:95a–b, 141b–142b, 182a; 3:16a, 24b–25a, 70b–71a, 91b; *ZḤ* 6d (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:684–722, 761–64. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37. On the association of bones with heavenly chariots, see *Zohar* 2:70b (*RR*), 76a.

"Members" renders שייפין (*shaiphin*)—singular, שייפא (*shaipha*)—a frequent Zoharic neologism that may be based playfully on the Talmudic description על איבריה לשפא (*al eivreih la-shappa*), "His arm [or: limb] entered the casket" (BT *Sotah* 7b). Or, the Zoharic sense of *shaipha* may derive from BT *Ḥullin* 42b: "This joint of the thighbone דשף (*de-shaph*), that

slipped [i.e., was dislocated], from its place [i.e., out of its socket].” Below (at note 208), the *Zohar* draws on this latter Talmudic line. Note also the expression in Job 33:21: ושפו עצמותיו (*Ve-shuppu atsmotav*), *And his bones are rubbed away*. This verse is discussed below (at notes 207–8).

See *Arukh*, s.v. *shaph*; Rashi, *Sotah* 7b, s.v. *la-shappa*; idem on Job 33:21, citing *Ḥullin* 42b; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, s.v. *shappa, shphph*.

204. **The Other Side provides flesh…** On the *Zohar*’s various (and differing) evaluations of “flesh” and the physical body, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:764–67.

205. **the heavens provide their powers…** The heavens, stretching over the earth, provide the skin, stretching over the human body. The four elements (fire, water, earth, and air) protect and sustain “all of these,” namely all the components of the human body. On the association of skin with the heavens, see *Zohar* 2:70b (*RR*), 76a.

206. **Afterward, each one takes the portion…** When a person dies, the components of his body return to their source and disintegrate. However, *ruḥa* (the spirit), deriving from *Shekhinah* (who is the Holy Spirit), endures in the Garden of Eden; and *nishmeta* (the soul), deriving from *Tif’eret*, ascends to the celestial Garden of Eden.

The bones, which also derive from *Shekhinah*, endure much longer than the rest of the body. According to rabbinic tradition, one particular bone at the base of the spine is indestructible. This bone, shaped like an almond, is called לוז (*luz*), “almond,” and from it God will one day resurrect decomposed bodies. See below, p. 551, n. 149.

“The essence” renders חשיבו (*ḥashivu*), “significance.” The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose*

waters do not fail. The simple meaning of the rare word צחצחות (*tsaḥtsaḥot*) is *parched places* (which could fit the context), but the *Zohar* often construes it as "radiancies," based on the root צחח (*tsḥḥ*), "to gleam."

207. **As long as the flesh…** As long as the body has not decomposed, Satan (or the Other Side) is empowered to accuse, since he is linked with the flesh, which derives from him.

The verse in Job, describing someone mortally ill, reads: *His flesh wastes away from sight* [or: *till it cannot be seen*], ושפו עצמותיו לא ראו (*ve-shuppu atsmotav lo ru'u*), *and his bones are rubbed away—they can no longer be seen* [or: *and his bones are laid bare—they cannot be looked upon*; or: *and his bones are rubbed away, out of sight*; or: *and his bones, once unseen, are laid bare*]. Here, the first half of the verse —*His flesh wastes away from sight*—implies that once the *flesh wastes away from* the *sight* of Satan, he is powerless to accuse.

Satan's accusations lead to punishment in the grave, known as *ḥibbut ha-qever* (beating in the grave). See 3 Enoch 28:10; *Ḥibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 258–61; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:150–52; 5:49; *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margaliot, par. 30; *Zohar* 1:185a, 225a; 2:141b, 151a, 199b, 211b; 3:53a, 126b.

On the soul's being punished until the body decomposes, see *Zohar* 2:151a, 214b. Cf. M *Sanhedrin* 6:6; Rashi on *Sanhedrin* 46a, s.v. *nit'akkel ha-basar*; Vol. 5, p. 380, n. 542.

208. **ושפו עצמותיו (*Ve-shuppu atsmotav*), *And his bones are rubbed away…*** The verb *shuppu* (*are rubbed away*) is here explained based on the related root שפף (*shphph*) or שוף (*shuph*), "to slip, be dislodged." Once the flesh is consumed and the bones separate from each another, Satan can no longer accuse. The wording "even though…" may mean "even though the bones (which are the holy essence of the

body) have slipped from their places and lost their holiness, Satan is still powerless to accuse them." See *Or Yaqar*.

On the bones as "the essence of the body," see above, note 206. The expression "שף (*shaph*), has slipped, from its place" derives from BT *Ḥullin* 42b (quoted above, note 203): "This joint of the thighbone דשף (*de-shaph*), that slipped [i.e., was dislocated], from its place [i.e., out of its socket]." Cf. *Zohar* 1:110a (*ST*).

209. **it is fitting for him to accuse** That is, for Satan to accuse, as long as the flesh has not been consumed.

210. **Rabbi Shim'on, gird your weapon...** The spiritual messenger urges Rabbi Shim'on to sharpen his mind if he wishes to probe more deeply.

The phrase "the matters that you began" refers to the description of the Heavenly Temple. See above at notes 72–135. On the "battle" of Torah, see below, p. 265, n. 61.

211. **my wife has passed away ...** Whereas the Companions are fully aware of Rabbi Shim'on's unique status, his wife was not. On Rabbi Shim'on's status, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

The expression "are they light-minded" renders קלה דעתייהו (*da'taihu qallah*). In rabbinic literature, the statement "Women are light-minded" means that they are easily swayed, inconstant, highly emotional, or of unstable temperament. See BT *Shabbat* 33b, *Qiddushin* 80b; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 22; *Zohar* 2:218a.

212. **דעתא (*Da'ta*), Mind, proceeds on six rungs...** *Da'ta* (Hebrew *Da'at*), "Mind" (or "Knowledge"), refers to the Divine Mind, pictured as the synthesis of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. The spiritual messenger describes how this potency proceeds through the six sefirotic rungs from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*, each of whom absorbs some of it. What remains for *Shekhinah*, the final rung, is "קל (*qal*), light, yet precious."

The messenger understands that Rabbi Shim'on wasn't asking about his own wife, but rather about the Divine Wife (*Shekhinah*), Bride of *YHVH*. Her element of *Da'at*, which is *qal*

(light), is pictured as עב קל (*av qal*), *a swift cloud*. She is situated "in the middle," between right and left, just as *Da'at* is situated between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

The messenger plays on the term כלה (*kallah*), "bride," and קל (*qal*), "light." Another of *Shekhinah*'s many designations is "Awe of *YHVH*." The full verse in Isaiah reads: *An utterance concerning Egypt: See, YHVH rides on a swift cloud and He is coming to Egypt. The godlings* [or: *idols*] *of Egypt will tremble before Him, and the heart of Egypt melt within it*.

213. **gird your weapon...** Sharpen your mind to comprehend further the design of the Heavenly Temple. See above, note 210.

Each of the twelve entrances to the Temple courtyard is inscribed with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. When a soul comes to appear before God in the Temple, she must enter the appropriate opening.

On the twelve entrances, cf. *Zohar* 1:92a; 2:128b. See also *Zohar* 2:251a (*Heikh*), according to which a synagogue should have twelve windows, corresponding to the twelve windows in the heavenly synagogue. See Joseph Caro, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 90:4; Abraham Gombiner, *Magen Avraham*, ad loc.

214. **Three hundred and sixty-five pillars...** On each of the four sides of the Temple courtyard, corresponding to the days of the solar year.

On the pillars ascending and descending and generating a melody, cf. [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 272 (132). According to an earlier description, there are three hundred and fifty pillars on the south side of the Temple. See above at note 124.

215. **An orphaned song ...** That is, whose author is anonymous.

The newness of this psalm refers to the fact that the angels have not yet sung it, and also to the identity of one particular angel who chants it now, namely the chief angel,

Metatron, who is designated as “the one who renews his youth.”

On Psalm 98 as “orphaned,” see BT *Avodah Zarah* 24b, which explores the account of the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines in battle, but God miraculously punished the enemy by breaking the idol of its god Dagon and striking the population with a plague. Consequently, the suffering Philistines send the Ark back on a wagon drawn by two milch cows, who miraculously head straight to Israelite territory as if they knew the way, as described in 1 Samuel 6:12: *The cows went straight on the way, on the way to Beth Shemesh; on a single road they went, lowing as they went, and veering neither right nor left*. The Talmudic discussion focuses on the opening of this verse: וישרנה הפרות (*Va-yisharnah ha-parot*), *The cows went straight*. “What is the meaning of *va-yisharnah?* Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Me’ir, ‘They sang שירה (*shirah*), a song.’… Which song did they sing?… Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish said, ‘The orphaned psalm: *A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has worked wonders. His right hand has won Him victory, and His holy arm.*’”

According to Rabbi Shim’on (in *Zohar* 2:137b–138a), the heavenly *ḥayyot* (living beings) chant this same psalm while carrying the divine Throne. Here, though, the spiritual messenger informs Rabbi Shim’on that “until now, holy angels did not offer [it] in praise.”

On Psalm 98, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:4; *Tosafot, Avodah Zarah* 24b, s.v. *mizmora yatma*; *Zohar* 1:123a–124a; 3:201a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 122. On the newness of this psalm, see *Zohar* 2:138a. On Metatron as נער (*na’ar*), “youth, lad, (heavenly) servant,” see above, pp. 5–6, n. 12.

216. **This one is called *new*…** Metatron, the Eternal Youth, is fittingly called *new*. Being closely linked with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the cyclically renewing Moon), he—

along with Her—"cleaves to the sun" (which symbolizes *Tif'eret*). Conversely, the demonic Other Side is old and withered.

On Satan (or the evil impulse) as old (based on the image in Ecclesiastes 4:13: *an old and foolish king*), see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 16; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:13; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:5; *Zohar* 1:110b (*MhN*), 179a–b; 2:33b, 181a, 238a. On the contrast between the youthfulness of Metatron (or *Shekhinah*) and the agedness of the Other Side, see *Zohar* 2:238a. On the relation between (or identification of) Metatron and *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 5–6, n. 12.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes 1 reads: *That which was is that which will be, and that which was done is that which will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun*.

217. **Sarah was rejuvenated with delight...** When she became miraculously fertile at the age of ninety, her rejuvenation was stimulated by "her rung," *Shekhinah*. The term עדנה (*ednah*), *delight*, alludes to עדן (*eden*), "Eden," symbolizing *Ḥokhmah*, the source of the flow of emanation. The final letter of עדנה (*ednah*)—ה (*he*)—is a feminine marker, symbolizing the Divine Feminine, *Shekhinah*. The feminine aspect of this miracle is underscored by the feminine wording היתה לי (*hayetah li*), *I have had* [literally: *there was to me*], rather than the masculine form היה לי (*hayah li*).

The verse from Genesis records Sarah's reaction to the divine prediction that she will bear a son at age ninety: *Sarah laughed inwardly, saying, "After being withered, am I to have delight, with my husband so old* [literally: *and my lord is old*]?" Here, apparently, the Head of the Academy construes Sarah's rhetorical question as a declarative statement: *After I have withered, I have had delight!*

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 87a: *"After I have withered, I have had ednah, delight!* Rav Ḥisda said, 'After the flesh had withered and wrinkles multiplied, the flesh נתעדן (*nitadden*), was rejuvenated [or: became tender], the wrinkles were

smoothed out, and beauty returned to its site.’” Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 48:17; *Zohar* 1:187b.

218. ***And my lord is old…*** The Head of the Academy wonders why Sarah would say *and my lord is old*, since the fact that Abraham was old does not preclude fathering children. (According to Genesis 25:1–2, Abraham later had six children with Keturah.) He explains that actually Sarah wasn’t referring to Abraham, but rather to the Other Side, who is old and impotent. She was belittling herself, admitting that she had clung to the Other Side, making him *my lord*, and therefore she had not given birth. (On the Other Side as an old fool, see above, note 216, quoting Ecclesiastes 4:13: *an old and foolish king*.)

The following verse confirms that Sarah was not describing Abraham as *old*, but was implicating herself. It reads in full: *YHVH said to Abraham, “Why is it that Sarah laughed, saying, ‘Shall I really give birth, when I am so old* [literally: *and I am old*]?’”

According to a midrashic interpretation, when God repeated to Abraham what Sarah had said, He changed her statement *and my lord is old* (referring to Abraham) to *and I am old* (referring to Sarah herself), in order to maintain marital harmony. See *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; JT *Pe’ah* 1:1, 16a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 48:18 *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:9; BT *Bava Metsi’a* 87a, *Yevamot* 65b; *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 7, *Shofetim* 18; *Tatiḥuma* (Buber), *Tsav* 10; *Pesiqta Rabbati*, add. 3, 199b; *Kallah Rabbati* 9:1; *Derekh Erets, Pereq ha-Shalom* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:7; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 18:13; *Da’at Zeqenim mi-Ba’alei ha-Tosafot*, Genesis 18:13.

The theme of demonic impotence derives in part from BT *Bava Batra* 74b, in the name of Rav: “Everything that the blessed Holy One created in His world, He created male and female. Even *Leviathan the elusive snake* and *Leviathan the writhing snake* (Isaiah 27:1) He created male and female—and if they mated with another, they would destroy the entire world. What did the blessed Holy One

do? He castrated the male and killed the female, salting her for [the feast of] the righteous in the world to come."

See Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Ma'amar al ha-Atsilut ha-Semalit*, 262–63; *Zohar* 1:34b, 46b; 2:34b (Vol. 4, pp. 150–51, n. 45), 103a, 108b–109a, 112a. In the *Zohar*, the theme of impotence may allude to Christian celibacy and the monastic ideal, to which the *Zohar* is absolutely opposed. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 149, and 234, n. 47.

219. ***Abraham was old, בא בימים (ba ba-yamim), coming into days...*** Here, obviously, Scripture does describe Abraham as old; but in this case, old age is a positive quality, as demonstrated by the phrase *ba ba-yamim*. This idiom is normally understood as "advanced in days [or: years]," but here the Head of the Academy interprets it hyperliterally: Abraham had attained and entered the cosmic days, namely the six (or seven) *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* (or to *Shekhinah*).

The clause "who renew their youth like an eagle" is based on Psalms 103:5: *Your youth is renewed like the eagle's*. This verse alludes to the popular ancient belief that the eagle regains its youth when it molts or in old age. See Isaiah 40:31, and David Kimḥi, ad loc. Cf. the legend of the phoenix, the mythological bird who dies in a self-created fire every five-hundred-to-over-a-thousand years, burning into a pile of ashes, out of which a phoenix chick is born. See Vol. 7, p. 540, n. 567; below, p. 528, n. 82.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *Abraham was old*, בימים בא (*ba ba-yamim*), *coming into days, and YHVH had blessed Abraham in everything*. On the hyperliteral reading of *ba ba-yamim*, see *Zohar* 1:103a, 126a (*MhN*), 129a–b, 142a, 224a.

220. **So, this melody...** After quoting the Head of the Academy, the spiritual messenger resumes his description of the pillars in the courtyard of the Heavenly Temple. (See above at notes 214–15).

The melody generated by the ascending pillars is a melody of Metatron, "that *new* one," for whom God's *right hand* and *holy arm* have *won victory*. The full verse reads: *A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has worked wonders. His right hand has won Him victory, and His holy arm*.

221. **Similarly, those descending...** The descending pillars chant another "orphaned" (i.e., anonymous) psalm.

On the phrase "orphaned song," see above, note 215. On the question of whether Psalm 100 is also "orphaned," see *Tosafot, Avodah Zarah* 24b, s.v. *mizmora yatma*; *Nitsotsei Orot*.

222. **calyx and blossom** The phrase derives from the biblical description of the lampstand in the Tabernacle. See Exodus 25:33, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; above, note 98.

223. **three apples...** The apple includes three colors: the white pulp, the red skin, and the green stem (or leaves). These symbolize respectively *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. See below, p. 761, nn. 14–15. On protruding and flashing letters, see above, note 83.

224. **bells of gold...** The phrase appears in Exodus 28:33, describing the robe worn by Aaron the high priest: *You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and crimson, on its hem all around, and bells of gold within them all around. Targum Onqelos* translates פעמני זהב (*fa'amonei zahav*), *bells of gold*, as זגין דדהבא (*zaggin de-dahba*), which is adopted here by the *Zohar*. See *Zohar* 2:95a, 192b; 3:209a.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *No weapon formed against you will succeed, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of YHVH, and their triumph through Me—declares YHVH*.

225. **An hour-and-a-half later...** On this period of time, see above, note 146.

On the phrase נגונא תאיבא (*nigguna te'iva*), "an enticing melody," cf. *ZḤ* 5d (*MhN*), which describes God as creating

שירים תאבים (*shirim te'evim*), "desirous songs," for His praise at the beginning of Creation. In the same passage, the opening word of the Torah—בראשית (*be-reshit*), *In the beginning*—is turned into an anagram: שיר תאב (*shir ta'ev*), "desiring [to chant] song." See *Midrash Mei ha-Shiloaḥ*, quoted in Isaac Onkeneira, *Ayummah ka-Nidgalot*, 6a (and in Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 1:1, n. 82). Cf. *TZ* 10, 24b.

226. **lattices...** שבכין (*Sevakhin*), "Latticework, meshwork," deriving from the description of Solomon's Temple, which mentions שבכים (*sevakhim*), "meshwork," surrounding the capitals of the two columns in the Temple. See 1 Kings 7:17; above, note 99.

The verse from Zechariah reads: *On that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, half of it to* הים הקדמוני (*ha-Yam ha-Qadmoni*), *the Eastern Sea* [literally: *the Forward Sea*], *and half to* הים האחרון (*ha-Yam ha-Aḥaron*), *the Western Sea* [literally: *the Rear*, or *Behind, Sea*]. The geographic orientation of the biblical authors (and all ancient western Semites) was not toward the north, as in modern cartography, but toward the east, where the sun rises. So "east" is also called קדם (*qedem*), "forward," and "west" is called אחור (*aḥor*), "behind." See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 115. On the verse from Zechariah, cf. above, note 97.

227. **explained this verse inside and outside...** Both inside and outside the Academy. Or, according to both its deeper meaning and its simple sense.

The anonymous child, whose voice was heard outside the Academy, had studied under a great master of Torah ("a pillar of the world"): the son of Rabbi Yehudah, who had himself been taught ("raised") by Rabbi Shim'on. This child was being forcibly held outside because of a certain sin that he had committed (which is clarified below).

The child is troubled by the verse in Zechariah (see the preceding note). Here, *Jerusalem* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is also identified with הים האחרון (*ha-Yam ha-Aḥaron*), understood

here as *the Final Sea*, referring to the last of the ten *sefirot*. The name of the other sea mentioned in the verse—הקדמוני ים (*ha-Yam ha-Qadmoni*)—is understood as *the Primordial Sea*, alluding to *Binah*, the source of all seven lower *sefirot*.

The child wonders how the waters of emanation below—within *Shekhinah* (Jerusalem)—can ascend to *Binah* (*the Primordial Sea*). Why would *Binah*, the source of emanation, need these waters? And how could *Shekhinah*—who is dry and parched until She receives the flow from above—saturate *Binah*, who is Herself a flowing spring?

On the theme of the wonder-child, see Scholem, *Devarim be-Go*, 270–83; below, p. 245, n. 1. On a person's student being considered his child, see BT *Sanhedrin* 19b, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: "Whoever teaches Torah to his friend's son is regarded by Scripture as if he had begotten him." See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 34; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 28c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 41(42):3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7; BT *Sanhedrin* 99b; *Ester Rabbah, Petiḥta* 11; *Rut Rabbah, Petiḥta* 7.

On *Shekhinah* as a pit or cistern, see *Zohar* 1:60a–b, 235a. On the image of a dug-out pit and a spring, see *Zohar* 2:42b (*RM*).

228. **To this voice of his...** The spiritual messenger tells Rabbi Shim'on that everyone in the Academy of the Garden of Eden listened to the child's voice, and their rapt attention prevented the forces of Judgment outside from punishing him.

229. **Rabbi Shim'on wept...** For the child's impending punishment and his exclusion from the Academy.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title Holy Lamp, see above, p. 27, n. 68. On children displaying wisdom on account of Rabbi Shim'on, see below, p. 254, n. 26.

230. **this son of the Living God...** On the Christological element in the portrayal of the wonder-child in the *Zohar*, see below, p. 245, n. 1.

231. **Three pillars...** Three noble souls.

232. **because I'm from another academy...** Having come from an earthly academy, the child is daunted by the glorious Academy of the Garden of Eden. The forces of Judgment holding him had apparently impressed on him how unworthy he was to enter.

233. **Here you will be among us...** The Head of the Academy reassures the child that he will be purified in the Garden of Eden for seven days and will then ascend to a higher Academy. See below, note 247. On the image of dew, see above, notes 37, 106, 189.

234. ביום ההוא **(*Ba-yom ha-hu*), *On that day...*** This opening phrase from the verse in Zechariah refers to the eschatological end of days, when God will reveal Himself to the nations in all His power and destroy the enemies of Israel. It is often called *Day of YHVH* (as in the first verse of the same chapter: Zechariah 14:1). Here, the child isolates the phrase *on that day* from its context and asks which day is being referred to.

He explains that *on that day* always alludes to *Shekhinah*, the last of the seven cosmic days (the lower seven *sefirot* beginning with *Ḥesed*). *Shekhinah* (the "end") is linked to Her Mother, *Binah*, who is the source of the entire sefirotic septet and thus called "beginning."

Being hidden and concealed, *Binah* is also called by the pronoun הוא (*hu*), *he*—implying that this *sefirah* cannot be addressed directly (in the second person) but only indirectly (in the third). According to its simple sense, the verse in Numbers reads ועבד הלוי הוא (*Ve-avad ha-Levi hu*), *The Levite, he alone, will serve* [*at the Tent of Meeting*]. Here, the child construes this as *The Levite* [symbolizing *Gevurah*] *will serve hu, he* [or: *him*, namely *Binah*].

Shekhinah, who links Herself to *Binah*, is fittingly called ההוא (*ha-hu*), *that*—which combines Her own symbolic letter, the feminine marker ה (*he*), with *Binah*'s designation הוא (*hu*). So *Shekhinah*'s name *ha-hu* combines *Binah* and Herself, beginning and end, which form one indivisible whole. The concluding

sentence alludes to the fact that (*he*)—symbolizing *Shekhinah* (the "end")—is also the final letter of the Name יהוה (*YHVH*).

On the sefirotic sense of the phrase *ba-yom ha-hu, on that day*, see *Zohar* 1:233a. On the sefirotic reading of the verse in Numbers, see *Zohar* 1:154b; 2:114a, 221b; 3:178a–b, 183b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 97. On *Binah* as *hu*, see also *Zohar* 1:67a, 156b, 157b (*ST*), 158b, 233a, 241a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 98. (Although *Binah* is often pictured as the Divine Mother, She is also characterized as World of the Male. See Vol. 5, p. 48, n. 132.)

On the linking of beginning and end, see the description of the *sefirot* in *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:7: "Their end is embedded in their beginning, their beginning in their end." On the verse in Zechariah, see above, notes 226–27.

235. **Jerusalem is destined to generate water…** As indicated by the verse in Zechariah: *On that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Eastern Sea and half to the Western Sea*. But this raises a new problem: If (*on*) *that day* alludes to *Shekhinah* ("the end of all rungs"), then how can She also be identified with *Jerusalem*, which seems in this verse to be separate from, and other than, *that day?*

The child explains that *Jerusalem* encompasses all the rungs surrounding and comprising *Shekhinah*, whereas ההוא (*ha-hu*), *that*, refers to Her inner core. The Temple in Jerusalem includes courtyards, chambers, the היכל (*heikhal*), "sanctuary," and the דביר (*devir*), "inner sanctuary; Holy of Holies." Within the Holy of Holies is a single point, representing the inner essence of *Shekhinah*, and it is this that is called *ha-hu, that*.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: הבשן ההוא יקרא ארץ רפאים לכל (*Le-khol ha-Bashan ha-hu yiqqare Erets Refa'im*), *All of that Bashan is called Land of Rephaim*. Here, to prove his point, the child selects just part of the verse: ההוא יקרא ארץ (*ha-hu yiqqare*

Erets), *That is called Land*—which now means "*Ha-hu, That, is called Shekhinah*, who is known as *Erets, Earth* (or *Land*)."

On the association of the verse in Psalms with the sanctuary, see *Tanḥuma, Bemidbar* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bemidbar* 3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 1:3.

236. **When this day will arise...** When *Shekhinah* (known as *that day* and symbolized by Heavenly Temple) will arise, waters will flow from Her. This flow originates from *Binah* (*the Primordial Sea*) and streams to *Shekhinah* (*the Final Sea*), with some of it returning to that *Primordial Sea*.

In the parable, the son gives back to his mother some of the milk that he sucks from her. Thus *Shekhinah* restores to *Binah* some of the emanation that She receives from Her. Here the child provides an answer to the questions that he posed above (at note 227).

Cf. *ZḤ* 66b (*ShS*). On the lattices, see above, note 226. On *Binah* and *Shekhinah* as respectively *the Primordial Sea* and *the Final Sea*, see above, note 227. On the verse from Zechariah, see above, notes 226–27.

237. ***The Final Sea...*** *Shekhinah*, last of the *sefirot*, including Her lowest rungs. See above, note 227.

238. **O holy, pious one...** The spiritual messenger describes the scenario to Rabbi Shim'on.

On the theme of "the reasons of Torah" (or "reasons for the commandments"), which plays a central role in Kabbalah, see Matt, "The Mystic and the *Miẓwot*."

On a deceased father's soul being rewarded for his son's wisdom or virtuous conduct, see below at note 296; *Zohar* 3:115b, 196b; *ZḤ* 49b, 84c (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. *Zohar* 3:144b (*IR*).

239. **His father bestowed** Providing an inheritance for his son so that he could devote himself to Torah.

240. **why he departed from the world...** The reason for the child's premature death is not revealed, but the public nature of his judgment and punishment in the afterlife is based on the principle of "measure for measure,"

since he embarrassed his teacher publicly by asking difficult questions.

On the grave nature of embarrassing someone, see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 58b: "Whoever publicly humiliates his fellow [literally: blanches his face] is as though he spills blood." See above, note 147.

241. **even though he was saved from the masters of Judgment…** As described above at note 228. Still, the child suffered in the Garden of Eden. The image (or ethereal body) for his soul was not completed for seven days, causing him embarrassment, and his bathing in supernal dew was painful.

On the ethereal body, see above, note 151; pp. 30–31, n. 78. On the spiritual messenger's statement "As for why he departed from the world, do not seek to know," cf. above at note 191.

242. **Beneath the circle of those lattices there…** In the courtyard of the Heavenly Temple. See above, notes 226, 236.

The Final Sea refers to *Shekhinah*. (See above, notes 227, 237.) Empowered by the flow from above, She subdues the demonic forces, pictured as mighty, raging waters.

On Leviathan, the primordial sea monster, see Vol. 4, pp. 150–51, n. 45. On the phrase "raging waters," see Psalms 124:5: *Then it would have come up past our necks—the raging waters*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Thus says YHVH, who makes a way through the sea, a path through mighty waters*.

243. **a childlike image…** Rendering צעצוע (*tsa'atsu'a*), a word that appears in a biblical description of the cherubim in Solomon's Temple: *He made two cherubim in the Holy of Holies*, מעשה צעצעים (*ma'aseh tsa'atsu'im*), *cast work, and they were overlaid with gold* (2 Chronicles 3:10). In BT *Bava Batra* 99a, this phrase is apparently understood as *fashioned as children*, based on the near-homonym צאצאים (*tse'etsa'im*), "offspring." Cf. BT *Sukkah* 5b: "What is כרוב

(*keruv*), a cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'כרבייא (*Ke-ravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רביא (*ravya*).'"

Illumined by the splendor of the Heavenly Temple, "the Head of the Academy attained that glory."

244. **women come forth and gather…** The spiritual messenger returns to the account of the various palaces for female souls in the Garden of Eden. See above at notes 149–57. On the phrase "new and ancient words," see above at notes 135, 166; Matt, "'New-Ancient Words.'"

245. **On every single Sabbatical…** Once every seven years, both the male and female souls in the earthly Garden of Eden ascend to the celestial Garden of Eden together with their children. Before ascending, they strip themselves of the ethereal body in which they are clothed in the Garden. (See above, note 241.) In the Heavenly Academy, they hear secrets of Torah from the chief angel, Metatron, who is called the Youth.

The mention of men, women, and children matches the description of the public reading of Torah, which took place every seven years on the festival of *Sukkot*, according to Deuteronomy 31:10–13; see verse 12: *Assemble the people—the men and the women and the little ones*…. Cf. above, note 80.

On Metatron as נער (*na'ar*), "youth, lad, (heavenly) servant," see above, note 215; pp. 5–6, n. 12. On the keys of Metatron, see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §72; *Zohar* 1:37b, 181b, 223b; 3:60a; *ZḤ* 39d–40a.

On Metatron as teaching in, or heading, the Heavenly Academy, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b; *Bereshit Rabbati* 5:24; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:353); *Sefer Ḥanokh* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:115–16); *Zohar* 1:4a, 24a (*TZ*); 2:169b; 3:197b; *ZḤ* 36b (*ST*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 280–81 (134–35); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 98–100.

246. ***the beauty of YHVH…*** Alluding to *Binah*. See above, p. 51, n. 143. Cf. [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 272

(132), 279 (134).

On the Palace of Love, see *Zohar* 1:44b–45a (*Heikh*); 2:97b, 146b, 253a (*Heikh*), 254b (*Heikh*), 260b (*Heikh*). The full verse in Psalms reads: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze* בנעם יהוה (*be-no'am YHVH*), *upon the beauty* [or: *delightfulness, loveliness*] *of YHVH*, ולבקר (*ul-vaqqer*), *and to reflect* [or: *search, seek, inquire, contemplate*], בהיכלו (*be-heikhalo*), *in His temple* [or: *in His palace*].

247. **Afterward, the children fly above…** To the Academy of the blessed Holy One, who teaches them Himself. (See above, note 43.) Meanwhile, the adults return to their places in the earthly Garden of Eden, clothing themselves once again in their ethereal bodies. See above, note 245.

248. **They said to him…** Both spiritual messengers speak to Rabbi Shim'on. The text here is fragmentary.

249. **… He conveys a flow from his side…** The beginning of this passage is missing, so the identity of the subject is uncertain. The speaker is presumably one of the two spiritual messengers.

Heavenly messengers gather in *the chamber of the runners*. See *Zohar* 1:43a (*Heikh*); 2:249b–250a (*Heikh*). The full verse reads: *Whenever the king would come to the house of YHVH, the runners* [or: *sentries*] *would carry them* [i.e., the shields] *and then bring them back to the chamber of the runners*.

250. **After midnight…** A flame issues from *Gevurah*, symbolized by Isaac, and strikes the angel Gabriel, who is called גבר (*gever*), which means "rooster" (as well as "man"). Gabriel resembles *Gevurah* Himself, who is "another, higher *gever*."

The "six sounds" are the six verses recorded below (which are followed by a seventh). The description בסכלתנו (*be-sukhletanu*), "intelligent," plays on the rabbinic morning blessing: "Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the

Universe, who has given the rooster בינה (*vinah*), intelligence, to distinguish between day and night."

On the midnight scenario, see above, p. 3, n. 6. On the rooster, see Rashi on BT *Eruvin* 53b, s.v. *maggidei ba-alatah*, according to whom the rooster's crows mark the various divisions of the night. See *Pereq Shirah*, 2:57 (s.v. *tarnegol*): "When the blessed Holy One comes to the righteous in the Garden of Eden, all the trees of the Garden sprinkle spices before Him. Then he [the rooster] praises." *Pereq Shirah* then lists seven verses proclaimed by the rooster.

See 3 Baruch 6:15–16; Naḥmanides on Job 38:36; *Zohar* 1:10b, 77b, 92b, 218b; 2:195b–196a; 3:22b–23b, 52b; *ZḤ* 13c (*MhN*), 88a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 105a, 12–13; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 168–97 (esp. 173–79).

251. **all roosters of this world call...** Rousing people from their beds to engage in the midnight ritual of studying Torah. See above, p. 3, n. 6.

The six hours mentioned here are those between midnight and six in the morning. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *A voice says, "Proclaim!" Another asks, "What shall I proclaim*?" *"All flesh is grass, all its goodness like flowers of the field."*

252. **What does he call out?...** After calling out the various verses, the rooster announces all the deeds of humankind committed during the preceding day.

The term "ledger" renders אחמתא (*aḥmeta*), which in the *Zohar* can refer to a treasure-house, treasury, archive, or ledger. See above, pp. 2–3, n. 5. The term "scribe's kit" derives from a vision recorded by Ezekiel describing God's punishment of Jerusalem via divine agents: *And look, six men were coming by way of the upper gate that faces north, each with his smashing weapon in his hand; and among them was one dressed in linen, with a scribe's kit at his waist. They came and stood beside the bronze altar* (Ezekiel 9:2). In rabbinic tradition, the heavenly scribe

dressed in linen is identified as Gabriel. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:5; BT *Yoma* 77a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *levush ha-baddim*; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 12; David Kimḥi on Ezekiel 10:7; Vol. 6, p. 328, n. 193.

253. **Were it not for the toes of his feet...** Among the toes on each foot of Gabriel (the heavenly rooster), the middle toe is big and the rear one is small. These impede him from executing judgment upon the world for all the misdeeds committed daily.

254. **What do they do?...** What do the toes do? At daybreak, all the toes on each foot merge, turning Gabriel's feet into two hooves, resembling the calf-like feet of the angelic *ḥayyot* who carried the Chariot-Throne as witnessed by Ezekiel.

The "thread of radiance" is a flow from *Ḥesed* (Love), symbolized by the south and associated with morning. See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, in the name of Resh Lakish: "To one who engages in Torah by night, the blessed Holy One extends a thread of *ḥesed* (love) by day, as is said: *By day YHVH directs* חסדו (*ḥasdo*), *His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. See below, pp. 501–2, n. 5.

On this paragraph and the preceding one, see Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 175–79. The full verse in Ezekiel, describing the *ḥayyot*, reads: *As for legs, they had a straight leg, and their feet were like a calf's foot. They gleamed like burnished bronze*.

255. **You asked about the branch of the threshing floor...** This line is an enigmatic fragment. On the association between a threshing floor and the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, see 2 Samuel 24:16–25. On the symbolism of the threshing floor, see below, pp. 768–69, n. 7.

256. **Within this courtyard...** Within the courtyard of the Heavenly Temple. On the 365 palaces, see *ZḤ* 82d (*MhN, Rut*). The verse in Psalms is addressed to Jerusalem.

257. **... depths, except for that one...** Again, the text is fragmentary.

258. **the day on which the Temple was destroyed, *Tish'ah be-Av*...** The ninth day of the lunar month Av, on which traditionally both the First and Second Temples were destroyed.

On God as shedding tears over Israel's suffering, see BT *Berakhot* 59a: "When the blessed Holy One remembers His children, who are plunged in suffering among the nations of the world, He sheds two tears into the Great Sea, and His voice resounds from one end of the world to the other."

See *Zohar* 1:4a–b, 231a; 2:9a, 18a (*MhN*), 19a–b (*MhN*), 195b–196a; 3:132a (*IR*), 137b (*IR*), 138b (*IR*), 143a (*IR*); *ZḤ* 53b, 88a (*MhN, Rut*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 274 (133). The total of seven depths corresponds to the seven heavens mentioned in BT *Ḥagigah* 12b–13a. See *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit* 9–10, 44 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:24–25, 43); *Zohar* 2:56b.

259. **Below, within the dregs of wine...** This and the following paragraphs appear in *Zohar* 2:191a in the context of the Golden Calf.

Wine symbolizes *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), whose dregs are the source of evil. The Primordial Demon, personifying all demonic forces, is the counterpart of Primordial Adam, who personifies all holy forces. He seeks to encroach on holiness and draw its potency. Then, he assumes physical form in order to enter the world.

According to rabbinic sources, Israel worshiped the Golden Calf as an imitation of the bull in the Divine Chariot (as described by the prophet Ezekiel). See *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 21: "The blessed Holy One said to him [Moses], '... I see them coming to Sinai and receiving My Torah, and I descend on Sinai in My chariot of four animals, on which they gaze, and they unhitch one of them and thus arouse My anger'—as is said: *the face of* שור (*shor*), *a bull* [or: *an ox*],

on the left... (Ezekiel 1:10), and it is written: *They exchanged their glory for the image of a bull*."

Here in the *Zohar*, the bull is associated with the demonic power, which originates from the left side. The bull (or specifically the Golden Calf) is the Primordial Demon's vehicle for invading the world.

The references to "four נזיקין (*neziqin*), damagers [literally: damages]," and to "primary causes of damage" derive from the classification in M *Bava Qamma* 1:1: "The four primary causes of damage are the ox, the pit, the crop-destroying beast, and the outbreak of fire." The word מזיקא (*mazziqa*), "demon," which appears earlier in this paragraph, likewise derives from the root נזק (*nzq*), "to harm, injure, damage."

On the relation between the Golden Calf and the image of the bull in the Divine Chariot, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 6; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:29; BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:2; 4:3; 42:5; 43:8; *Midrash Tehillim* 106:6; Naḥmanides on Exodus 32:1; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:52–53, n. 271; Lieberman, in Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 122–23, n. 24; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 183–84. On the demonic nature of the ox (or bull), see *Zohar* 1:166b, 172b; 2:6a, 64b–65a, 191a, 236b–237a, 240b; 3:86b, 186a, 207a.

260. **What is *eating grass*?...** The demonic power draws sustenance only from grass, not from the various species of grain.

"The seven species of grain" apparently include "the five species of grain" often referred to in rabbinic literature (identified in the Middle Ages with wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye) plus rice and millet. See M *Ḥallah* 1:1, *Pesaḥim* 2:5; *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 8; BT *Berakhot* 35b, 36b–37b; *Zohar* 1:157a; 3:189a, 244a. Cf. Deuteronomy 8:8, which lists seven species of grain and fruit.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *They exchanged their glory for the image of a bull eating grass*. For the earlier interpretation of *eating grass*, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 6:

“Nothing is more disgusting and repulsive than an ox [or: a bull] when it is eating grass.”

On the contrast between a simple interpretation and “the essence of the matter,” see Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 2a: “I have not come here for דרשא (*derasha*), [homiletical or midrashic] interpretation, but rather for the essence of the matter.” See *Zohar* 1:213a; 2:145a, 175a; *ZḤ* 25d (*MhN*), 86a–b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 307; Matt, “New-Ancient Words,” 198.

261. **…and those [other ones] sit in their places…** The beginning of this passage is missing. Its context is a certain grand palace in the courtyard of the Heavenly Temple. “These” and “those” apparently refer to various souls or angels.

262. **the cherubim… fruitful vines…** On the cherubim and vines, see above at notes 99–100. On the fruitfulness of the future Temple, see Ezekiel 47:12; BT *Sanhedrin* 100a. Cf. the description of Solomon’s Temple in BT *Yoma* 21b, 39b.

263. **…[*The fool*] *hugs his hands*…** The beginning of this passage is missing. The proverb in Ecclesiastes describes someone who does no work at all, but just sits clasping his hands (and perhaps gnawing his knuckles); such a person causes himself devastating harm: *The fool hugs his hands and eats his flesh* [or: *his own flesh*].

Here the fool represents the Other Side (or Satan), who mourns when a human dies because human flesh derives from the demonic realm. (See above at notes 204–8.) Now the verse implies that the foolish demonic power consumes *his flesh*—that is, the flesh of the corpse. On Satan as an old fool, see above, note 216, quoting Ecclesiastes 4:13: *an old and foolish king*.

264. **What benefit does he derive…** After tempting a person to sin, then accusing him, and killing him, all that Satan gains is that person’s “flesh,” with no authority over

“the rest,” which includes the person’s bones, organs, and especially his spirit and soul.

When Israel succumbs to Satan’s temptations, there is bitterness above and below. On earth Israel suffers, while their lack of virtue prevents them from strengthening God Himself, so there is little hope to vanquish evil and for Israel to escape its clutches.

On the notion of strengthening heavenly power, see above, note 115. On the question “What benefit does he derive?” see BT *Ta’anit* 8a; JT *Pe’ah* 1:1, 16a; *Zohar* 1:143a; *ZḤ* 78a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 61.

265. **Even regarding his flesh…** God is displeased that the Other Side derives any pleasure at all from a person’s death, even “his flesh” (that is, the dead person’s flesh, deriving from the demonic realm).

“Machinations” renders תסקופין (*tasquppin*), which may derive from *Targum Yonatan*, Judges 14:4, where תוסקפא (*tusqapha*) renders תאנה (*to’anah*), *pretext*. Alternatively, *tasquppin* may mean “accusations” or “false accusations,” based on *Targum Onqelos*, Deuteronomy 22:14, where מלין תסקופי (*tasquppei millin*) renders עלילות דברים (*alilot devarim*), *accusation* (*of misconduct*, namely, of sexual misconduct, made by a husband against his wife). See *Targum Yonatan*, Ezekiel 24:12; David Kimḥi on Judges 14:4; *Zohar* 1:169b, 179b; 2:65a–b (Vol. 4, pp. 355–56, nn. 548, 553); 3:266b; *ZḤ* 18d (*MhN*).

266. **they are all congealed in dense disturbance…** The subject “they” is uncertain, apparently referring to powers of the Other Side. See *Nitsotsei Orot*. Cf. *Sullam, Matoq mi-Devash*.

“In… disturbance” renders בערטיראה (*be-artira’ah*). Here *artira’ah* may be based playfully on the root ערער (*’r’r*), “undermine, upset, demolish.” See above, note 172; below, p. 313, n. 56; p. 329, n. 110; p. 333, n. 123; p. 389, n. 308; *ZḤ* 55b.

267. ***storm wind fulfilling His word*** Symbolizing the Angel of Death. Cf. *ZḤ* 75d–76a (*MhN, Rut*).

On the identification of the Angel of Death with Satan (or the Other Side), see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same." The full verse in Psalms reads: *Fire and hail, snow and smoke* [or: *fog*], *storm wind fulfilling His word*.

268. **Rabbi Shim'on said...** He reminds the spiritual messenger that the Angel of Death dances before female mourners returning from the cemetery.

See BT *Berakhot* 51a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Three things were told to me by the Angel of Death. 'Do not take your shirt in the morning from your attendant and put it on. Do not let water be poured on your hands by one who has not washed his hands. Do not stand in front of women when they are returning from being in the presence of the deceased, because I go dancing in front of them with my sword in my hand, and I have permission to harm.' If one encounters them, what is his remedy? Let him move from his place four cubits; if there is a river, let him cross it; and if there is another road, let him take it; and if there is a wall, let him stand behind it. Otherwise, let him turn his face away and say, *YHVH said to Satan*, '*YHVH rebuke you, O Satan...*' (Zechariah 3:2), until they have passed by." See *Zohar* 2:196a–b.

269. **But his pleasure is in the women's lamentation...** Since he, too, mourns over the body of the deceased, whose flesh derives from him.

270. **If so, why does he go and accuse a person...** If the Angel of Death (or Satan) mourns over the death, why does he accuse the person, thereby hastening his death?

271. **over what is his: his flesh...** The flesh of the corpse, deriving from the Other Side.

272. **...It goes and seeks to convulse the world...** This passage belongs with the account above (at note 258),

describing the two divine tears falling into the Great Sea. The subject “it” refers to this sea. The threatening waters are subdued only by a manifestation of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham. On the divine tears, see above, note 258. On their boiling nature, see *Zohar* 1:4b.

273. **reaching to the Cave of Machpelah…** Where all the patriarchs and matriarchs (except for Rachel) are buried.

274. **All the alphabets combine…** The beginning of this passage is apparently missing.

The clause “joining in permutation of the Holy Name” likely refers to a long series of combinations between each letter of the alphabet and each letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). “Calyxes” renders כפתורין (*kaftorin*). See Exodus 25:31–36; above, note 98.

275. **the Name stands in four letters…** The four letters of *YHVH*. On the period of “an hour-and-a-half,” see above, note 146.

On the [Divine] Name of Twelve Letters, see BT *Qiddushin* 71a: “Our Rabbis taught: At first the Name of Twelve Letters was transmitted to everyone. Once the unruly [who misused the Name] increased, it was transmitted to the humble of the priesthood, and these ‘swallowed’ it [i.e., didn’t utter it aloud] during the sweet chanting of their fellow priests.”

The exact nature of the Name of Twelve Letters is unknown. In medieval literature, it is sometimes associated with the three occurrences of *YHVH* in the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24–26). See *Bahir* 80 (111): “numbering three, numbering twelve.” According to *Or Yaqar* (on *Zohar* 3:78b), the twelve-letter name is אהיה יהוה אדני (*Ehyeh YHVH Adonai*). See *Zohar* 1:16a, 19b; 2:58a, 201b; 3:78b, 146a, 146b (*RM*), 147a; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 92, 290, n. 32.

For possible interpretations of the Name of Twenty Letters, the Name of Twenty-eight Letters, and the Name of

Twenty-five Letters, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Yahel Or*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

276. **Letters of Forty-two Letters emerge…** The Name of Forty-two Letters is mentioned in the name of Rav, though not recorded, in BT *Qiddushin* 71a. Hai Gaon indicates that it consists of the letters חקבטנע ,יגלפזק ,שקוצית, which are also the initial letters of the forty-two words constituting the prayer *Anna be-Khoaḥ* (Please, with the Strength [of Your Right Hand's Greatness]). According to Jacob ben Meir Tam (Rabbenu Tam), this name consists rather of the first forty-two letters of the Torah, from the ב (*bet*) of בראשית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning*, through the ב (*vet*) of בהו (*vohu*), *empty* (or *void*) (Genesis 1:2).

On the Name of Forty-two Letters, see Lewin, *Otsar ha-Ge'onim*, 4:2:23 (on *Ḥagigah* 14b); *Tosafot, Ḥagigah* 11b, s.v. *ein doreshin*; *Zohar* 1:1a, 15b, 30a–b; 2:92b (*Piq*), 130b, 132b, 175b, 180b, 187a, 234a–b; 3:78a–b; *ZḤ* 42a; Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 21:12–13; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 94–95; Idel, "Al ha-Peirushim," 161–62, n. 24; 167–68, n. 52. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:62.

The complex Name of Seventy-two Letters derives from three consecutive verses in Exodus 14:19–21, describing the scene at the Red Sea: *The angel of Elohim who was going before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them, and the column of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the dark, and it lit up the night—and one did not draw near the other all night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and YHVH drove the sea with a mighty east wind all night, and He turned the sea into dry ground, and the waters were split*.

Remarkably, each of these three consecutive verses contains the same of number of Hebrew letters: 72. From

these verses, a complex divine name is composed, known as the Name of Seventy-two, the implication being that the Sea was split by the power of this name. The name contains seventy-two triads (totaling 216 letters), formed according to the following pattern: the first letter of the first verse, the last letter of the second verse, the first letter of the third verse (forming the first triad); the second letter of the first verse, the penultimate letter of the second verse, the second letter of the third verse (the second triad); etc.

On the Name of Seventy-two, see *Zohar* 2:51b–52a (Vol. 4, pp. 257–64 and nn. 216, 221–26). On protruding and sparkling letters, see above, note 83.

277. **When the Head of the Academy descended there...** To the earthly Garden of Eden.

According to the book of Daniel, at a lavish banquet King Belshazzar of Babylon became very frightened when he saw a disembodied human hand writing certain words on the plaster of the wall of his palace. After none of the king's wise men could read or interpret the writing, the queen suggested that Daniel be summoned. He proceeded to read the words as מנא מנא תקל ופרסין (*Mene mene teqel u-pharsin*), which he interpreted for the king. See Daniel 5:5, 24–28.

According to Shemu'el (in BT *Sanhedrin* 22a), the words were not written normally (horizontally) but rather vertically in five columns of three letters each: the first column read (from top to bottom) מנא (*mene*); the second, מנא (*mene*); the third, תקל (*teqel*); the fourth, ופר (*u-phar*); the fifth, סין (*sin*). Horizontally, the formula appeared as three words (of six letters each) on three consecutive lines: ממתוס ננקפי אאלרן (*mem, mem, tav, vav, samekh; nun, nun, qof, pe, yod; alef, alef, lamed, resh, nun*).

The passage here belongs with the passage above at notes 117–18, which seems to be its continuation.

278. **... For every Sabbath eve...** The beginning of this passage is missing. As Israel welcomes the Sabbath on Friday evening, all the angelic camps gather. The number

390 is the numerical equivalent of the word שמים (*shamayim*), "heaven." See *Derekh Erets, Pereq ha-Minin*, 31.

279. **the Tree of Life strikes its leaves...** The Tree of Life symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with its surrounding *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod* (pictured here as its branches). The World that is Coming symbolizes *Binah*.

עלמא דאתי (*Alma de-atei*) is the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*), "the world that is coming." This term has often been understood as referring to the hereafter and often been translated as "the world to come." From another point of view, however, "the world that is coming" already exists, occupying another dimension. See *Tanḥuma, Va-yiqra* 8: "The wise call it *ha-olam ha-ba* not because it does not exist now, but for us today in this world it is still to come." See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 8:8; and Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 37: "'The world to come' does not succeed 'this world' in time, but exists from eternity as a reality outside and above time, to which the soul ascends."

In Kabbalah "the world that is coming" often refers to *Binah*, the continuous source of emanation. See *Zohar* 3:290b (*IZ*): "the World that is Coming—coming constantly and never ceasing." Cf. *Bahir* 106 (160); Asher ben David, *Peirush Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, in *Kabbalah* 2 (1997): 293; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 26 (30); idem, *Sod Eser Sefitot*, 375; *Zohar* 1:83a, 92a, 141b; 3:286a.

280. **generates holy souls...** These souls constitute (or include) additional Sabbath souls, which are bestowed upon those observing Sabbath. Each Sabbath eve, these additional souls "emerge" from the Tree of Life (via *Shekhinah*), while other souls "enter," namely souls of the righteous who have died, who ascend from the earthly Garden of Eden to the celestial Garden of Eden. See *Zohar* 2:136b: "Whenever Sabbath enters, one dwells in the world of souls."

See BT *Beitsah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "On Sabbath eve, the blessed Holy One imparts an additional soul to a human being. When Sabbath departs, it is taken from him, as is said: שבת ויינפש (*shavat va-yinnafash*), *He ceased and was refreshed* (Exodus 31:17)—once *shavat*, it [the Sabbath] has *ceased*, ווי אבדה נפש (*vai avedah nefesh*), 'Woe, the soul is lost!'"

See *Zohar* 1:48a, 81b (*ST*); 2:88b, 98a, 135b–136b, 204a–205b, 207a–b, 208b–209a, 256a (*Heikh*); 3:35a, 79b, 95a, 288b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 17a (*MhN*), 83a (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 111, 114; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1222, 1230–33; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 121–36.

On souls issuing from the Tree of Life, see above, note 203. On the destiny of souls of the righteous on Sabbath, see above, p. 31, n. 79. On souls of the righteous ascending as additional Sabbath souls descend, see *Zohar* 2:136a–b; *ZḤ* 82d–83a (*MhN, Rut*). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

281. **Then all of Israel are adorned with crowns...** Each one is adorned with an additional Sabbath soul. Similarly, souls of the righteous who have died ascend from the earthly Garden of Eden to the celestial Garden of Eden, where they revel in delights issuing from *Binah* above (known as the World that is Coming). When Sabbath departs, all the additional Sabbath souls return back above, while the souls of the righteous return to the earthly Garden of Eden.

282. **As soon as all those souls...** As soon as Sabbath ends and the additional Sabbath souls return above, they are clothed in their ethereal bodies and present themselves before God, who asks them what new interpretation of Torah they heard (or offered) on earth during this Sabbath.

The Celestial Family includes all the angels, who confirm the innovation of Torah in the Heavenly Academy,

while God Himself seals that new word of Torah in the Supreme Academy.

On the *Zohar*'s emphasis on innovation and creativity, see *Zohar* 1:4b–5a; 2:85a; Matt, "New-Ancient Words," 194–204. Cf. Isaac of Acre, *Me'irat Einayim*, 118; and the striking formulations of Jacob ben Sheshet (*Ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 364, 370): "It is a *mitsvah* for every wise person to innovate in Torah according to his capacity.... Do not think that this is far-fetched. If I had not invented it in my mind, I would say that it was transmitted to Moses at Sinai."

On the soul's ethereal body, see above, pp. 30–31, n. 78. On the two Academies, see *ZḤ* 36b; above, note 43. On sealing special words of Torah, see *Zohar* 1:4b; *ZḤ* 36b.

283. **When a word is innovated in Torah...** On Sabbath, and the additional Sabbath soul ascends on high after Sabbath.

According to the description in Ezekiel 1:6, each of the angelic *ḥayyot* (*living beings*) had four wings; whereas according to Isaiah 6:2, each of the seraphim had six wings. Here, the spiritual messenger accounts for the discrepancy by implying that an innovation of Torah stimulates the *ḥayyot* to grow two additional wings. The phrase "clothing themselves in wings" alludes to the wording in Isaiah: *Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew*.

On the contrast between the number of wings in Isaiah and Ezekiel, see BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 23; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 33, 155b–156a. Cf. *Zohar* 3:9b.

284. **But when the blessed Holy One asks them...** If God asks the returning Sabbath soul to share a new interpretation of Torah, and she has nothing to offer, then the wings of the *ḥayyot* droop. The spiritual messenger construes the verse in Ezekiel as *When they* [namely the Sabbath souls] *stood still* [having no innovation to share], *their wings* [namely the wings of the *ḥayyot*] *slackened*. He

quotes the verses from Job and Nehemiah to demonstrate that the verb עמד (*'md*), "to stand," can mean "to stand still, be silent."

See *ZḤ* 12b (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Sotah* 39a, in the name of Rava son of Rav Huna: "When the Torah scroll is opened [in the synagogue to be read], it is forbidden to converse even on a matter of *halakhah*, as is said: *As he opened it, all the people stood* (Nehemiah 8:5), and 'standing' means nothing but silence, as is said: *I waited, for they did not speak, for they stood and no longer responded* (Job 32:16)."

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, like the sound of Shaddai, as they moved, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp;* בעמדם (*be-omdam*), *when they stood still* [or: *when they halted*], *their wings slackened*.

The full verse in Job reads: *I waited, for they did not speak, for* עמדו (*amedu*), *they stood* [or: *ceased; were silent; stood still*], *and no longer responded*. The full verse in Nehemiah reads: *Ezra opened the scroll in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; and as he opened it, all the people amedu, stood up*.

285. **For Rav Hamnuna said...** As an example of an innovation of Torah on Sabbath, the spiritual messenger quotes an interpretation of Psalms offered by Rav Hamnuna. When this was reported in the Garden of Eden, souls of the righteous were crowned for the whole coming week.

The phrase *from the sanctum* alludes to washing (or sanctifying) the hands before the meal. The clause *and from Zion may He sustain you* alludes to the blessing recited before eating bread, since bread sustains a person. The word *all* in the following verse includes the additional ritual washing of hands toward the end of the meal. The reference to *ascent offerings* alludes to the Grace after Meals, which is considered an offering to God. If a person fulfills all these laws relating to the meal, God will reward

him. Finally, returning to the first phrase—מקדש (*mi-qodesh*), *from the sanctum*—Rav Hamnuna indicates that this also alludes to *Qiddusha Rabba* (The Great Sanctification), namely the blessing recited over wine on Sabbath day.

On the figure of Rav Hamnuna, see below, pp. 261–62, n. 48. The context in Psalms (20:3–5) reads: *May He send you help from the sanctum, and from Zion may He sustain you. May He recall all your grain offerings, and your ascent offerings may He relish* [or: *consider as fat/juicy/rich*]. *Selah. May He grant your heart's desire, and all your plans may He fulfill*.

286. **He opened again…** The spiritual messenger reports another interpretation offered by Rav Hamnuna.

A lofty mountain alludes to Mount Abarim (or the mountain range of Abarim), east of the Dead Sea, where Moses died. See Numbers 27:12–14; Deuteronomy 32:48–52; 34:1–8; *Zohar* 2:157a. On the eve of the Messiah's arrival, *Shekhinah* will ascend Mount Abarim and announce the redemption.

The clause "but it includes all" means that the *herald of joy to Zion* refers not only to *Shekhinah* but also to a human *herald*, namely Hephzibah, mother of the Messiah.

The *Zohar* is drawing here on the seventh-century apocalyptic work *Sefer Zerubbavel*, which names the Messiah as Menaḥem son of Ami'el, and identifies his mother as Hephzibah, wife of Nathan son of David. See *Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:55–57. On the question of why Nathan is not the Messiah's father, see *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

In Isaiah 62:4, Hephzibah (which means "My delight is in her") appears as the future name of Zion and Jerusalem. According to 2 Kings 21:1, Hephzibah was the mother of King Manasseh son of King Hezekiah. According to one rabbinic tradition, the Messiah's name is Menaḥem son of Hezekiah. See JT *Berakhot* 2:3, 5a; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:51; BT *Sanhedrin* 98b; *Midrash Mishlei* 19:21.

On the view that the Messiah is descended from Nathan son of King David (rather than from David's son Solomon), see Vol. 2, pp. 160–61, n. 340; *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Zohar; Matoq mi-Devash*. On Menaḥem son of Ami'el, see also *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19 (and Luria's note 47); *Eikhah Zuta* (B) 1:2; *Pirqei Heikhalot Rabbati* 32:5; 33:1; 39:1, 4; 40:1–2 (*Battei Midrashot* 1:118–19; 130, 132–34); Ibn Ezra on Zechariah 3:8.

287. **A voice will be heard in the world…** Proclaiming the redemption. Two kings are mentioned in *Sefer Zerubbavel* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:55).

Hephzibah will proclaim the verse from Isaiah, which reads *Behold, My Lord YHVH comes in might, and His arm wins triumph for Him; see, His reward is with Him, His recompense before Him*. In this verse, *His reward* and *His recompense* refer to what God has acquired and now offers to the cities of Judah. The Celestial Family includes all the angels.

288. **What is meant by פעולתו (*pe'ulato*), *His recompense*?** Based on verbal analogy, Rav Hamnuna identifies פעולתו (*pe'ulato*), *His recompense*, with the *goodness* hidden away for the righteous—פעלת (*pa'alta*), *that You have wrought, for those who shelter in You before the eyes of humankind*.

289. **What is meant by צפנת (*tsafanta*), *You have hidden*?** Why would God need to hide this *goodness*? Who could possibly steal it from Him?

290. **With that by which He strikes…** Normally, God strikes and punishes with His left hand—*Gevurah* (or *Din*, "Judgment")—whereas He draws near, or heals, with His right hand, *Ḥesed*. However, in the time of redemption, He will provide healing with the very quality by which He struck and punished Israel. As the verse in Jeremiah implies, evil (and punishment) come מצפון (*mi-tsafon*), *from the north*, which symbolizes *Gevurah*. But in that same place are hidden all the rewards destined for Israel, as implied by the

description in Psalms: *How abundant Your goodness that* צפנת (*tsafanta*), *You have hidden, for those who revere You*.

Rav Hamnuna paraphrases the rabbinic principle "By that which He strikes, He heals." See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:24; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 26:15; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11, p. 216; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:5; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 9; *Beshallaḥ* 23–24; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beshallaḥ* 18; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 33, 156b–158a; *Shemot Rabbah* 23:3; 26:2; 50:3. Cf. *Mekhilta, Vayassa* 1.

On the rewards being in the north, cf. *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:383–84). The verse in Jeremiah reads: *From the north, evil will be let loose on all the inhabitants of the land*. See *Bahir* 109 (162).

291. ***I will say* לצפון (*la-tsafon*), *to the north, 'Give!'*...** God will instruct *Gevurah* (symbolized by *the north*) to *give* the hidden reward to Israel. But how can *Do not withhold!* pertain to *Ḥesed* (symbolized by *the south*), which by its nature is so giving and could never *withhold*?

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *I will say to the north, "Give!" and to the south, "Do not withhold! Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters form the end of the earth."*

292. **the blessed Holy One will awaken Abraham...** Who symbolizes *Ḥesed*. According to a rabbinic tradition, God had asked Abraham which punishment he preferred for his descendants: Hell or subjugation to the nations. Abraham chose the latter, thereby consigning Israel to subjugation, or "selling them off," as implied by a midrashic reading of the verse in Deuteronomy: *unless their Rock had sold them* (since Isaiah 51:1–2 identifies Abraham as *the rock from which you were hewn*).

Now, on the eve of messianic redemption, Abraham appears resistant to Israel's deliverance—"like someone to whom this seems unfavorable." The patriarch wants to

make sure that Israel has already been purged of all their wrongdoing.

Cf. BT *Shabbat* 89b, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: "In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will say to Abraham, 'Your children have sinned against Me.' He will respond, 'Master of the Universe! Let them be wiped out for the sanctification of Your Name.'"

On Abraham's original choice of subjugation to the nations rather than Hell, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:21; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:2; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pequdei* 5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 67a; *Shemot Rabbah* 51:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 52:8; *Zohar* 2:83b; 3:299a. Cf. *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9.

The full verse in Deuteronomy 32 reads: *How could one pursue a thousand, or two put a myriad to flight, unless their Rock had sold them and YHVH had given them up?* According to the midrashic reading, the final clause means that God agreed with the decision made by *their Rock*, Abraham. The context in Isaiah reads: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug! Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you!*

293. **everything you said was merely on the surface…** God realizes that deep inside, Abraham really feels compassion for Israel. So just as Abraham is only pretending to object to the deliverance, God says '*Do not withhold*!'—even though He knows that by his very nature the patriarch (symbolizing *Ḥesed*) cannot withhold.

For the play on *la-tsafon, to the north*, and *tsafanta, You have hidden*, see above, note 290. In the concluding sentence, "she" refers to Hephzibah; see above, note 286.

294. **she will announce good news a second time…** Hephzibah will proclaim another verse (from Isaiah, as soon described). *Shekhinah* will first ascend Mount Abarim and then go to inform the patriarchs, who are buried in the Cave of Machpelah. Then She will proceed to Jerusalem and

wail over the site of the Temple, as She did when it was destroyed. The blessed Holy One will finally raise Her from the dust. The concluding word, “surely,” emphasizes that in this verse *Jerusalem* is the name of *Shekhinah*.

The phrase “shriek a scream” renders תקרקר קירא (*teqarqer qira*), which plays on the wording in Isaiah 22:5: מקרקר קיר (*meqarqar qir*), *Kir shouted* [or: *shouting a shout*, or *battering down a wall*]. See *Zohar* 1:228b; *ZḤ* 91b–c (*MhN*, *Eikhah*). On Mount Abarim, see above at note 286.

295. **By this, too…** This innovation of Rav Hamnuna’s, as well, brought great joy to the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. (See above, notes 285–86.) Such words crown the righteous and God Himself, along with His whole Celestial Family of angels.

296. **I have heard, O Holy Lamp…** The spiritual messenger informs Rabbi Shim’on (the Holy Lamp) that when someone’s Sabbath soul transmits an innovation of Torah to the divine assembly (upon returning above after the Sabbath), the soul of that person’s father is kissed and adorned.

The clause “when they descend” means “when souls of the righteous descend back to the earthly Garden of Eden after spending Sabbath in the celestial Garden of Eden.” On Rabbi Shim’on’s title Holy Lamp, see above, p. 27, n. 68. On a deceased father’s soul being rewarded for his son’s wisdom or virtuous conduct, see above, note 238.

1. **THE SECTION OF TZITZIT** The Torah portion *Shelaḥ Lekha* concludes with the commandment of tzitzit: *YHVH said to Moses, saying, "Speak to the Children of Israel, and you shall say to them that they should make for themselves* ציצת (*tsitsit*), *a tassel* [or: *fringe*], *on the hems* [or: *skirts*] *of their garments for their generations and place on the tassel of the hem a cord* [or: *twist, thread*] *of* תכלת (*tekhelet*), *purple* [or: *bluish purple; violet; blue*]. *It shall be a tassel for you, and you will see it and be mindful of* [or: *and remember*] *all of YHVH's commandments and do them. And you will not stray after your heart and after your eyes, after which you go whoring. So that you will be mindful and do My commandments, and you will be holy to your God. I am YHVH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am YHVH your God* (Numbers 15:37–41).

2. ***He showed me Joshua the high priest…*** The context (Zechariah 3:1–7) reads: *He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of YHVH—*והשטן (*ve-ha-Satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him.* [*The angel of*] *YHVH said to the Accuser, "May YHVH rebuke you, O Accuser; may YHVH, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel.* [*The angel*] *spoke up and said to his attendants, "Take the filthy garments off him!" And he said to him, "See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in robes." Then I gave the order: "Let a pure diadem be placed on his head." And they placed the pure diadem on his head and clothed him in garments, as the angel of YHVH remained standing* [or: *stood by*]. *The angel of YHVH solemnly advised Joshua, saying, "Thus says YHVH of Hosts: If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and guard My courts, and I will let you move about among these standing here."*

The conclusion of this biblical passage implies that Joshua will be rendered fit to associate with the heavenly

beings. See above, pp. 118–19 at nn. 195–200. The connection between this passage and tzitzit is clarified below (beginning at note 20).

3. **To all the various prophets…** Generally, prophecy stems from the sefirotic pair of *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, but Moses attained the higher *sefirah* of *Tif'eret* (or an even higher realm).

On the superiority of Moses' prophecy, see BT Yevamot 49b: "All the prophets gazed through an opaque glass [literally: a speculum (or: glass, mirror, lens) that does not shine], whereas Moses our teacher gazed through a translucent glass [literally: a speculum that shines]." In Kabbalah, these two specula symbolize respectively *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. See below, pp. 399–400, n. 345.

The verse in Numbers (spoken by God about Moses) reads: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him;* ומראה (*u-mar'eh*), *and a vision* [or: *in clear view*; *clearly*; *in plain sight*], *not in riddles; and the image of YHVH he beholds*. See *Sifrei Zuta* 7:89; 12:8; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 83; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 13:2; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 6, p. 115; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 45; *Midrash Aggadah*, Leviticus 25:6; *Zohar* 1:171a; 2:82b; 3:156a.

4. ***A man went…*** The full verse reads: *A man went from the house of Levi and took a daughter of Levi*. The verb *took* means "took in marriage."

According to the simple sense of the verse, *a man* refers to the future father of Moses. But here, by verbal analogy, the anonymous *man* is identified as the blessed Holy One (*Tif'eret*), who is described later in Exodus as *a man of war*.

For similar instances of the proof-text *a man of war*, see BT *Sotah* 42b, 48a; *Sanhedrin* 93a, 96b; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 10; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:1. This passage (until below at note 19) appears in *Zohar* 2:11b–12a.

5. ***house of Levi*—blessed Holy One…** The name לוי (*Levi*) is interpreted according to the root לוה (*lvh*), "to

accompany, join," as in Genesis 29:34. Here, "blessed Holy One" alludes to *Binah*, or to the site of union between *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah*, the river of emanation.

Levi also suggests Leviathan, who represents the joy of union, based again on the root *lvh*. Leviathan symbolizes *Yesod* (the *sefirah* of sexual union and pleasure), issuing from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

On *Yesod* as Leviathan, see *Zohar* 2:11b, 48b, 50b; 3:58a, 60a (all of which quote Psalms 104:26); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 17; 169, n. 51. Cf. *Zohar* 1:247a.

On the perpetual union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:11b, 50b, 55a, 56a; 3:4a, 11a, 61b, 65a–b, 77b–78a, 102a, 120a, 267b, 290b (*IZ*). On the formula "X—blessed Holy One; Y—blessed Holy One," see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 27:9. On multiple senses of "blessed Holy One," see *Zohar* 1:232b.

The context in Psalms (104:25–26) reads: *This sea, vast and broad of reach, gliding creatures there beyond number, living beings small and great. There ships go—Leviathan, whom You formed to play with*.

6. ***daughter of Levi*—blessed Holy One...** *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the moon and here designated as "blessed Holy One." She is "taken" (in marriage) by *Tif'eret*.

7. ***the woman*, surely!...** *Shekhinah*, the Divine Female, who gives birth to the soul of Moses. One of Her many names is זאת (*zot*), "this," perhaps because as the Divine Presence She is constantly right here.

Just as a human female matures from *daughter* to *woman*, so *Shekhinah* is first described as *daughter* of the higher divine couple (*Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*), and later when She is married to *Tif'eret*, She is called *woman*.

The quotation from Genesis is part of Adam's exclamation upon the creation of Eve: *This one* [or: *This*] *at last, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! This shall be called Woman, for from man was this taken*. On *Shekhinah* as *zot* (*this*), see *Zohar* 1:49b, 72a, 93b, 176b, 200b, 228a;

2:11b–12a, 37a–b, 39b, 50b–51a, 54b, 57a, 126b, 236b, 238b; 3:8b, 13b, 24a, 31a, 37b, 40b–41a, 48b, 52b–53b, 58b–59a, 60b, 62a, 76a, 79b, 108a, 115b, 145b–146a, 176a, 179b–180b, 201a, 250a, 297b, 299a.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *The woman conceived and bore a son, and she saw that he was good and she hid him three months*.

8. **three months…** The months of Tammuz, Av, and Tevet are all characterized by harsh Judgment. Traditionally, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the walls of Jerusalem were breached; on the ninth of Av, the First and Second Temples were destroyed; on the tenth of Tevet, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began.

The clause *and she hid him three months* now implies that *Shekhinah* made sure that Moses would not be born during any of these inauspicious months; if he had been, he would have been vulnerable to harsh forces and plagued by suffering.

On the three inauspicious months, see 2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4–6; *Zohar* 2:78b; 3:58a, 259a; *ZḤ* 36d (*RR*), 92d (*MhN, Eikhah*).

On the preexistence of the soul, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:7; BT *Yevamot* 62a, *Niddah* 30b; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 11, *Pequdei* 3, *Nitsavim* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153–58; *Ḥibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 253–55; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:698–703. On the preexistence of Moses' soul, see *Zohar* 2:53b. On Moses' intimacy with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:11b–12a; Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128; Vol. 8, p. 485, n. 81; below, pp. 257–58 at nn. 35–36.

9. ***papyrus basket…* with Her signs…** The word תיבה (*teivah*), meaning "basket" and "ark," symbolizes *Shekhinah*. By placing Moses within Her *teivah, Shekhinah* protected him from the countless angels who swim within Her sea—angels who would later become jealous of Moses and challenge his receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.

The colors white and black may symbolize *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, which flank Moses' *sefirah, Tif'eret*. See *ZḤ* 35a, where חמר (*ḥeimar*), *bitumen*, and *pitch* (Exodus 2:3) are associated respectively with white and black. The association of white with חמר (*ḥeimar*), is probably due to an implicit midrashic interpretation or vocalization as חמר (*ḥomer*), "clay." See BT *Sotah* 12a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:21; Rashi on Exodus 2:3. According to a rabbinic image, the Torah was inscribed by God in black fire upon white fire. See JT *Sheqalim* 6:2, 49d; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; Vol. 8, p. 354, n. 113.

The phrase "lovely tusser silk" is a conjectural rendering of טיסטרובלא (*tisterobela*), a Zoharic neologism that may combine the name of the wild silkworm of India and China (known in Sanskrit as *tasara*) with the Castilian word *bella*, "beautiful, lovely." Various English forms of the Sanskrit term include: tusser, tussar, tassar, tussore, tussah, and tushar. On *tasara* and the production of silk in thirteenth-century Spain, see Vol. 3, p. 75, n. 506. Cf. Vol. 4, p. 284, n. 303. For a different reading, see *Zohar* 2:12a (Vol. 4, p. 55, n. 243).

On *teivah* as a symbol of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:67a. On the angels' opposition to Moses' receiving the Torah, see BT *Shabbat* 88b; Vol. 5, p. 416, n. 646.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *When she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him and smeared it with bitumen and pitch, and she placed the child in it and placed it in the reeds by the bank of the Nile*. For the full verse in Psalms, see above, note 5. Cf. *Zohar* 1:236a, 247a–b; 2:30b, 48b–49a, 56b.

10. ***Pharaoh's daughter came down…*** A demonic force deriving from *Din*, harsh Judgment, which is located on the left side. Whereas *sea* symbolizes *Shekhinah, Nile* represents impurity. See Galante on *Zohar* 2:12a; *Sullam*. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The verse reads: *Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, her maidens walking along the Nile*.

11. ***your staff with which you struck the Nile…*** The verse records God's directive to Moses, preparing him to strike the rock at Horeb to bring forth water: *Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel, and your staff with which you struck the Nile take in your hand, and go*. The point here is that Aaron, not Moses, struck the Nile (Exodus 7:19–20); Moses struck (or stretched his staff over and split) only the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16, 21). It would seem, then, that when Scripture states that Moses *struck the Nile*, it really means that he *struck the sea*; thus there is no real distinction between *Nile* and *sea*!

The explanation, however, is that since Moses helped Aaron strike the Nile, it is as though Moses did it himself. Similarly, Scripture states that *YHVH struck the Nile*, since Aaron's action derived from God's command and power. The conclusion is that *Nile* and *sea* are indeed distinct and opposed to one another. See BT *Sanhedrin* 99b.

12. ***Her maidens…*** Other demonic powers deriving from the left side. See above, note 10.

13. ***She opened it…*** The full verse reads: *She opened it and saw him, the child, and look, a boy crying! She had compassion on him and said, "This is one of the children of the Hebrews*." The repeated direct object in the phrase הילד ותראהו את (*va-tir'ehu et ha-yeled*), *and she saw him, the child*, seems redundant. However, Rabbi Ḥizkiyah indicates that the word should not be read ותראהו (*va-tir'ehu*), *and she saw him*, but rather ותרא ה ו (*va-tere he vav*), "*she saw* [the letters] *he* [and] *vav*," which symbolize respectively *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) and Her spouse, King *Tif'eret*. When Pharaoh's daughter perceived these symbolic letters on the infant Moses, she felt compassion for him.

See BT *Sotah* 12b (and Maharsha, ad loc.); *Shemot Rabbah* 1:24 (and Maharzu and Shinan, ad loc.); Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 2:2; *Da'at Zeqenim* on Rashi on Exodus 2:6.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters *he* and *vav*, see above, p. 74, n. 60. On the significance of every element of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 336; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:47; BT *Eruvin* 13a *Menaḥot* 29b, *Ḥullin* 60b; Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10, intro, principle 8; idem, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:50; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37–38; *Zohar* 1:54a, 135a, 145b, 163a, 187a, 201a, 234b; 2:12a, 55b–56a, 59b, 65b, 93b, 95a, 98b–99b, 124a, 217b, 236a; 3:6b, 71b–72b, 79b, 149a–b, 152a, 192a, 202a, 213b, 221a, 265a, 269a; *ZḤ* 6d (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341–42; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1082–83; Matt, "'New-Ancient Words,'" 194–207. On *Shekhinah*'s title *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

14. **Until here...** The verses from this chapter discussed so far allude to the upper world. The following verses can be read simply, according to their simple meaning.

The "exceptional" verse (2:4) actually appears earlier than the verse just discussed (2:6). It reads in full: *His sister stationed herself afar, to know what would be done to him*. The simple meaning of *his sister* is Miriam, but now the phrase alludes to the divine *sister, Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). According to the kabbalistic reading of Song of Songs, She is addressed intimately by Her lover, *Tif'eret*, as *my sister*. *Shekhinah stationed herself* to watch over Moses (who eventually attained the rung of *Tif'eret*).

On the spiritual meaning of Exodus 2:4, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:20; JT *Sotah* 1:9,17b; BT *Sotah* 11a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:22. On the verse in Song of Songs, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Zohar* 1:112a, 140b; 2:46a; 3:95a, 233a, 236b, 286a–b, 296a (*IZ*). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

15. ***Afar…*** *Shekhinah* watched over Moses from a distance. The word *afar* alludes to the Holy Spirit (sometimes identified with *Shekhinah*), based on the verse in Jeremiah. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:20; JT *Sotah* 1:9, 17b; BT *Sotah* 11a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:22; *Zohar* 2:125b.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *From afar* [or: *Afar*], *YHVH appeared to me*. In the *Zohar, afar* can allude to *Ḥokhmah*, near the distant top of the sefirotic ladder. See *Zohar* 1:6a, 107a; 2:50b; 3:20b, 35b, 60a, 90a. Cf. above at note 3.

16. **What is implied?…** By the entire preceding discussion. Souls are engendered by the union of the divine couple, *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*.

On the preexistence of the souls of the righteous and of Moses' soul, see above, note 8. On the soul's divine parents, see *Zohar* 1:245b; 2:94b; 3:7a, 42b.

17. ***Let the earth bring forth a living soul…*** *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel) is symbolized by *the earth*, and this verse indicates that She gave birth to the soul of Adam, which derives from *Ḥokhmah*, who is Himself called Primordial Adam.

On *a living soul* as the soul of Adam, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:1; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 2; *Zohar* 1:34a; 2:55a; 3:19a, 39b, 43b, 70b. Cf. 3:24b, 46b. On the allusion to *Ḥokhmah*, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 39–40; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

18. **and kissed him…** Namely, Rabbi Ḥizkiyah. See above at notes 2, 4.

19. **Happy is the share of Moses…** Who surpassed all other prophets and who was conducted by God Himself into a divine realm. See *Zohar* 1:44b (*Heikh*); 2:88b–89a. Cf. 1:22a.

On glimpsing God from behind walls (or a wall), see Maimonides, *Shemonah Peraqim*, 7; *Zohar* 1:232b (*Tos*) (Vol. 3, p. 405, n. 509); 2:69a–b, 82a, 130b, 213a; *ZḤ* 15c

(*MhN*), 39d. Cf. above, note 3; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 1:1, p. 393. On Moses' title Faithful Prophet, see above, p. 104, n. 153.

20. ***He showed me Joshua the high priest…*** The speaker is apparently again Rabbi Ḥizkiyah, who opened with this verse (above at note 2). For the biblical context, see that note.

21. **What is meant by before *the angel*?…** According to Rabbi Yitsḥak, this *angel* is one who judges a person. See Ibn Ezra on the verse; *Zohar* 3:214a; *ZḤ* 60d–61a (*MhN, ShS*).

For the context in Zechariah, see above, note 2. The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *Do not let your mouth make your flesh sin, and do not say before* המלאך (*ha-mal'akh*), *the messenger* [or: *the angel*], *that it was a mistake. Why should God rage over your voice and ruin the work of your hands?* According to its simple sense, this verse refers to making rash vows.

22. **every person who fails…** Everyone who fails to fulfill the *mitsvah* of tzitzit will be clothed in the afterlife in a filthy garment and be punished for his failure.

The two phrases "עטופא (*ittufa*), a wrap, of *mitsvah*" and "a garment of *mitsvah*" may refer respectively to the large tallit worn during prayer and to the small tallit worn as an undergarment. On the phrase "a wrap of *mitsvah*," see *Halakhot Gedolot*, 1:505; Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, p. 631; *Zohar* 1:204b; 3:174b, 176a, 265a, 266a; *ZḤ* 41d, 85a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 58 (and Wolfson's n. 2), 234–35; [idem?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 14.

On the filthy garments, see *Zohar* 3:214a. According to BT *Sanhedrin* 93a (in the name of Rav Pappa), Joshua's *filthy garments* signified his failure to prevent his sons from immoral behavior. See *Targum Yonatan*, Zechariah 3:3; David Kimḥi on Zechariah 3:3; *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Ezra 10:18.

On the relation between one's conduct on earth and the garment to be worn in the afterlife, see also *Zohar* 1:224a–b (Vol. 3, p. 347, n. 249); 2:210a–b (Vol. 6, pp. 197–99, nn. 266, 270–71); above, p. 102, n. 151.

23. **a certain garment recognized by masters of Hell…** See *Zohar* 3:214a.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *At all times let your garments be white, and oil on your head not be lacking*. According to an interpretation in BT *Shabbat* 153a, *let your garments be white* alludes to the white threads of tzitzit.

24. **in the mystery of the Book of Concealment…** Namely, in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment). See *Zohar* 2:179a (*SdTs*). For the meaning of this cryptic description there, see Vol. 5, pp. 580–81, n. 84. Below, these lines are interpreted as applying to the *mitsvah* of tzitzit.

25. **How many witnesses…** According to a rabbinic tradition, two angels accompany a person constantly. Here Rabbi Yehudah expands the number.

See BT *Ta'anit* 11a and *Ḥagigah* 16a, based on Psalms 91:11: *For His messengers* [or: *angels*] *He will command for you to guard you on all your ways*. See also *Berakhot* 60b, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *hitkabbedu*; *Shabbat* 119b; *Zohar* 1:12b, 144b, 165b, 174b, 191a; 2:106b; 3:52b; *ZḤ* 47a, 84d (*MhN*, *Rut*).

26. ***and the Accuser standing at his right…*** The verse reads: והשטן (*ve-ha-Satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him*. See above, note 2.

27. **places tefillin on his head…** The association of tefillin with the Name of God is based on a Talmudic tradition. See BT *Berakhot* 6a, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: "It is written: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed upon you, and they will be in awe of you* (Deuteronomy 28:10), and it has been taught: Rabbi Eli'ezer the Great says, 'This refers to tefillin of the head.'"

Each of the tefillin contains four passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) written on parchment. The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head is divided into four compartments, each containing one of the four passages. In the *tefillah* of the arm all four passages are written on one piece of parchment in a single compartment. Here, each of the four compartments of the *tefillah* of the head symbolizes one of the letters of the name *YHVH* (and its corresponding *sefirah* or *sefirot*). So if a person raises his head, "he sees the supernal Holy Name."

See *Zohar* 1:13b–14a. On the significance of tefillin, see above, p. 73, n. 56. On the straps hanging, see *Zohar* 3:236b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 240. On the passage in *Berakhot*, see BT *Berakhot* 57a, *Megillah* 16b, *Sotah* 17a, *Menaḥot* 35b, *Ḥullin* 89a.

28. **sees the other arm...** He sees the *tefillah* of the hand, bound to his "other" (i.e., left) arm (and hand). "The knot of the Holy Name" may refer to the knot formed by the strap passed through this *tefillah*, which is shaped like the letter י (*yod*), the first letter of *YHVH* (and the last letter of *Shaddai*). Alternatively, it can refer to the form of the straps wound around the hand, shaped like the letter ש (*shin*), the first letter of *Shaddai*. Cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 240.

29. **He enwraps himself in a wrap of *mitsvah*...** In the tallit worn during prayer.

Rabbi Yehudah proceeds to interpret the cryptic lines from *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment), applying them to tzitzit. (See above, note 24.) The "four kings" are the four threads inserted through (going "forth toward") the holes in the four corners of the garment. These are also pictured as four "witnesses," corresponding to the four groups of witnesses described above (at notes 25–26). The "many grapes" may symbolize all of the other *mitsvot*, of which one is reminded by the tzitzit. The "skins and

branches” may represent the ramifications (or deeper meanings) of the *mitsvot*.

On *tsitsit* as witnesses, see BT *Menaḥot* 44a. Traditionally, a person first wraps himself in the tallit and then puts on tefillin, although the sequence here could imply the reverse. See *Zohar* 3:81a, 120b, 265a; *ZḤ* 41d; *Or Yaqar*; Ḥayyim Yosef David Azulai, *Birkei Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 25:4; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh sheba-Nistar*, 45–46. On the phrase “a wrap of *mitsvah*,” see above, note 22.

30. **Bound with them are seven runners…** The continuation of the lines from *Sifra di-Tsni’uta* (The Book of Concealment).

The passage here reflects the following custom of winding the tzitzit. One inserts four threads through the holes in the four corners of the garment and folds them over double (thereby forming eight half-threads in each corner). Three of the full threads are white and one longer thread is dyed *tekhelet* (blue; or purple, bluish purple, violet) —or three are white and the longer one is half white and half dyed *tekhelet*. The blue thread (or the blue half of the longer thread) is wound around the other threads a number of times, and then the threads are knotted, completing one “joint” (or section). Additional joints are formed similarly.

The phrase “seven runners” is interpreted as referring to the number of “windings.” The maximum number of such windings is thirteen, and the minimum is seven. This is based on a statement in BT *Menaḥot* 39a, “One who makes few should make no less than seven; and one who makes many should make no more than thirteen.” Medieval commentators and authorities differ as to whether this Talmudic statement refers to the number of joints or the number of windings in each joint.

Here “windings” seems to refer to the number of windings in each joint, although it could conceivably refer

to the number of joints (which consist of windings). In *Shushan Edut*, 364, Moses de León refers to seven, nine, or thirteen windings. Cf. idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234–35. In *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 11:14, Joseph Caro mentions seven, nine, eleven, and thirteen windings in four separate joints. In *ZḤ* 101b–c (*Tiq*), the Talmudic reference to thirteen is clearly applied to the number of joints. *Miqdash Melekh* and *Matoq mi-Devash* interpret the reference here similarly as referring to the number of joints, although this may be based partly on the fact that instead of כריכן (*kerikhan*), "windings," they follow the reading צרירין (*tseririn*), "bindings," which could refer to the knotted joints. The latter reading is attested in Es3, which reads צרירן (*tseriran*), and in *Or Yaqar* and the printed editions. The former reading—כריכן (*kerikhan*), "windings" (which I have adopted)—appears in P5, V3, V5, and V22. Two other manuscripts (Pr13, V18) exhibit a hybrid form צריכן (*tserikhan*). (In script only a tiny difference distinguishes the letters כ [*kaf*] and צ [*tsade*].) The reading *kerikhan* is supported by the verb that follows shortly—לכרכא (*le-kharekha*), "to wind"—as well as by the phrase "seven כריכן (*kerikhan*), windings," which appears below at note 33 and is attested there by all the manuscripts and printed editions.

On the statement in *Menaḥot*, see also Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *lo yifḥot misheva*; Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz, *Sefer Yere'im* 401 (17); Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, hilkhot tsitsit* 1:8; and commentaries ad loc.; Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*, positive commandment 26; Joseph Ḥabiba, *Nimmuqei Yosef, halakhot qetanot* (*Menaḥot*), *hilkhot tsitsit* 12b–13a; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 11:14; idem, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 11:14. A number of medieval sources quote the Talmudic statement as "One who makes few should make no less than seven joints…." See, e.g., Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 2:641; and Moses of Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*; and Caro, *Beit Yosef* (as cited above).

Currently the Ashkenazic practice is to use windings of seven, eight, eleven, and thirteen in four joints respectively. The sum of the first three numbers equals the numerical value of יהוה (*YHVH*); the last number equals the numerical value of אחד (*eḥad*), "one." So together all four windings indicate "*YHVH* is one." Among some Sephardic Jews, the practice is to use windings of ten, five, six, and five, matching the numerical value of the four letters of יהוה (*YHVH*).

31. **This blue is mystery of King David…** *Tekhelet* (blue) symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom) and is associated with the ideal king, David.

The phrase "the thread of Abraham" alludes to a midrashic interpretation of Genesis 14:23. This verse records part of Abram's oath to the king of Sodom: *From a thread to a sandal strap, I will not take anything that is yours, so that you will not say, "I made Abram rich."* See *Bereshit Rabbah* 43:9, in the name of Rabbi Abba son of Memel: "The blessed Holy One said to him, 'You said, "*From a thread*." By your life, I will give your descendants the *mitsvah* of tzitzit [featuring the thread of *tekhelet*].'"

Shekhinah, symbolized by תכלת (*tekhelet*), "blue," is also the תכלית (*takhlit*), "consummation," of the entire flow of emanation. Alternatively, Her enhancement and fulfillment are the *takhlit*, "final goal," of existence. See Naḥmanides on Numbers 15:31; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 99; *Or Yaqar*.

On the association of *tekhelet* with *Shekhinah*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Whoever fulfills the commandment of tzitzit is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory." See above, p. 72, n. 53. On the association of tzitzit with *Shekhinah*, see also *ZḤ* 85a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 364; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234–35.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see BT *Sotah* 17a, *Ḥullin* 89a; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 17; *Aggadat Bereshit* 13.

32. **Throne of Glory** One of the names of *Shekhinah*, upon whom is enthroned King *Tif'eret*, or *Ze'eir Anpin* (the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Yesod*). See the passage from *Sifrei* quoted in the preceding note.

33. **Seven windings—for She is seventh...** *Shekhinah* is the seventh of the lower seven *sefirot* and corresponds to the last of the seven windings of tzitzit. The six *sefirot* above *Shekhinah* are *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*, the last of whom is known as Righteous One. The maximum number of windings, thirteen, corresponds to God's thirteen attributes of Compassion. As the last of the *sefirot, Shekhinah* is the gateway by which one can approach the divine realm.

On the seven and thirteen windings, see above, note 30. For the list of thirteen attributes (recorded in Exodus 34:6–7), see above, p. 52, n. 145. For the correspondence between the thirteen windings and the thirteen attributes, see Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*, positive commandment 26; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 364; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234–35. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

34. **She is one thread...** *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the thread of *tekhelet*, whose essential blue ingredient (actually purple, bluish purple, or violet) is extracted from the glands of "a certain fish," namely the חלזון (*ḥillazon*), which has been identified as the *Murex trunculus* snail, found off the Mediterranean coast. Here, Rabbi Yitsḥak transfers this small water creature to the Sea of Galilee (or Kinneret).

The Sea of Kinneret symbolizes *Shekhinah*, based on the association of כנרת (*kinneret*) and כנור (*kinnor*), "harp," an instrument played by King David, who here represents *Shekhinah*, also known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom). (See 1 Samuel 16:23; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Deuteronomy 33:22, p. 65b; *Zohar* 1:260b [*Hash*]; 3:150a; Baḥya ben Asher, Numbers 10:2.)

In fact, the name ים כנרת (*yam kinneret*), “Sea of Kinneret,” may derive from shape of the lake, which resembles a harp. Cf. BT *Megillah* 6a.

On the harp above King David’s bed, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on the Ḥasid: “There was a harp suspended above David’s bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn.” See *Zohar* 3:11a, 21b–22a, 23a–b.

In the concluding clause, “heaven” symbolizes *Tif’eret*, and “Throne” symbolizes *Binah*. The imagery derives from the rabbinic tradition quoted in note 31: “Whoever fulfills the commandment of tzitzit is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the heaven [or: the sky], and the heaven resembles the Throne of Glory.”

On the supposed location of the snail *ḥillazon* in the Sea of Galilee, see Vol. 8, pp. 503–4, n. 42; *Or Yaqar*. On the *ḥillazon*, see also BT *Menaḥot* 44a: “The *ḥillazon* resembles the sea in its bodily color [or: in the color of its blood], and in its shape it resembles a fish. It ascends [from the sea] once every seventy years, and with its blood one dyes *tekhelet*. So it is very expensive.” See above, p. 72, n. 53.

35. **Here is written מצוה (*mitsvah*), commandment…** In the biblical passage on tzitzit, this term figures prominently: *It shall be* לציצת (*le-tsitsit*), *a tassel, for you, and you will see it and be mindful of* [or: *and remember*] *all of YHVH’s* מצות (*mitsvot*), *commandments, and do them* (Numbers 15:39). Rabbi Yitsḥak indicates that the term *mitsvah* alludes to *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), based on three verses that link *mitsvah* and מלך (*melekh*), *king*.

Malkhut is adorned by *Yesod* (Foundation) and the “root,” which refers here to *Binah*, or perhaps *Keter*. The mention of “remembrance” alludes to the biblical wording: *You will see it and remember all of YHVH’s commandments*. The manifestation of *Malkhut* reminds one of the other sefirotic

crowns. She is also called *Tsedeq* (Righteousness), through whose gates one can enter to encounter *YHVH* (which can refer to *Ze'eir Anpin*, namely *Ḥokhmah* through *Yesod*). The word *all* (in *all of YHVH's commandments*) includes with *Malkhut* "all the other (sefirotic) crowns."

The concluding sentence quotes the final clause from the cryptic passage in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment): "bearing witness, not staying in their places." (See above at note 24.) This alludes to angelic witnesses (symbolized by the seven windings of *tekhelet*) who roam the world, examining how humans act and admonishing them. See above, notes 29–30. On seven roaming angels, cf. Zechariah 4:10: *These seven are the eyes of YHVH, roaming over the whole earth*. On the image of angels "not staying in their places," see Ezekiel 1:14: *The living beings darting back and forth like a flash of lightning*.

On the association between *Shekhinah* and *mitsvah* (or *mitsvot*), see *Bahir* 131 (190); *Zohar* 1:157a; 3:40b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 58 (and Wolfson's n. 3). The two verses in Psalms read in full: *Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and praise Yah. This is the gate* ליהוה (*la-YHVH*), *of YHVH* [or: *to YHVH*]*; the righteous will enter it*.

36. **Implements of *mitsvah*...** See BT *Megillah* 26b: "Our Rabbis have taught: Implements of *mitsvah* may be thrown away [once they can no longer be used]; implements of holiness are to be stored away. The following are implements of *mitsvah*: sukkah, *lulav*, shofar, tzitzit. The following are implements of holiness: cases for scrolls, tefillin, mezuzot, a mantle for a Torah scroll, a tefillin bag, and tefillin straps."

"Implements of *mitsvah*" do not possess inherent holiness, so they may be discarded once they can no longer be used; whereas "implements of holiness" (which are associated with sacred writings) must be stored away respectfully even when they have worn out.

One might object that certain "implements of *mitsvah*" allude to the Name *YHVH* and its corresponding *sefirot*—for example the four species for *Sukkot*: the *lulav* (palm branch), *aravah* (two willow twigs), *hadas* (three sprigs of myrtle), and *etrog* (citron). However, Rabbi Yitsḥak explains that only "implements of holiness" are actually inscribed with the name *YHVH* (or are accessories to such sacred writings), so these alone "are to be stored away."

On the divine significance of the four species, see Vol. 8, p. 181, n. 366; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1249–51. On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

37. **Those threads...** The threads of tzitzit, hanging from the four corners of the garment, symbolize the four directions of the world, which are ruled by *Shekhinah* ("this place"). She is pictured as the לֵב (*lev*), "heart," of both this world and the upper worlds. *Shekhinah* Herself is "suspended from the supernal heart," namely from *Tif'eret*, "and all is (dependent on) the לֵב (*lev*), heart, emerging from" *Ḥokhmah*.

The numerical value of לֵב (*lev*), "heart," is thirty-two, which equals the total number of threads of tzitzit (eight on each of the four corners). This is also the number of the "paths of Wisdom," as implied by the conclusion of this paragraph.

On the threads of tzitzit, see above, note 30. On the threads and the four directions of the world, see Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 364; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234. On the thirty-two paths of Wisdom, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2. On the connection between these paths and the thirty-two threads of tzitzit, see *Bahir* 62 (92); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 525–26; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 364; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 234; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 99.

38. **The measure of this and the length of this...** Apparently, the exact measure and length of the threads of

tzitzit. For various interpretations, see Or *Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. For other references to this book, see *Zohar* 1:33b; 3:285a, 286b. Cf. 1:224a; 2:139b; 3:128b (*IR*), 180b, 156b, 264b.

See Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 25; and the comment by Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, on *Zohar* 1:7a: "All such books mentioned in the *Zohar*... have been lost in the wanderings of exile.... Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the *Zohar*." For a catalogue of these books, see Neuhausen, *Sifriyyah shel Ma'lah*.

39. **should follow this heart...** Namely, *Shekhinah*. (See above, note 37.) Above Her are *the eyes of YHVH*, namely of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Yesod*).

The full verse in Numbers reads: *It shall be a tassel for you, and you will see it and be mindful of all of YHVH's commandments and do them. And you will not stray after your heart and after your eyes, after which you go whoring*. See above, note 1.

40. **Why is the exodus from Egypt mentioned here...** In the biblical passage about tzitzit.

Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that when Israel left Egypt they entered the realm of *Shekhinah* ("this share"), by whose power the blessed Holy One slayed the Egyptians. So the Exodus is mentioned "in its place"—namely in the *mitsvah* of tzitzit, which is associated with *Shekhinah*.

On the association of *Shekhinah* with tzitzit (and specifically with *tekhelet*), see above, notes 31–35, 37. The full verse in Numbers reads: *I am YHVH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am YHVH your God*. See above, note 1.

41. ***As in the days of your coming out...*** The ultimate redemption of Israel will resemble that of the Exodus. Rabbi Yeisa wonders why the verse reads *As in the*

days, since the Exodus happened in a single day. He explains that the plural—*days*—alludes to the six sefirotic days, namely *Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah*, by whom *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is blessed. With those same multiple powers—unifying the masculine divinity with *Shekhinah*—God intends to redeem Israel from their current state of exile.

In the passage from Isaiah, מודעת זאת (*muda'at zot*), *this is known*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is called *zot*, *this*. Currently, She *is known* by the tzitzit on the tallit ("a wrap of *mitsvah*"), as well as by Her various ways, but in the time of redemption She will be known and recognized by divine miracles—the *wonders* mentioned in the verse from Micah.

The verse in Zechariah can imply that in the time of redemption *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *His name*) *will* both *be one*. See *Zohar* 2:134a, 161b–162a; 3:7b, 56a, 77b, 93b.

On the theme of the verse in Micah, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 8; *Tanḥuma, Eqev* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 17; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:11. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, *this*, see above, note 7. On the phrase "a wrap of *mitsvah*," see above, note 22. The verses in Isaiah read: *You will say on that day, "Praise YHVH, proclaim His name. Make His deeds known among the nations; declare that His name is exalted. Sing to YHVH, for He has done gloriously; let this be known* [literally: *this is known*] *in all the world!"*

1. ***More desirable than gold…*** The Psalmist is praising the commandments of Torah. On Torah as God's Name, see above, p. 26, n. 66.

2. **Whoever engages in Torah grasps the Tree of Life…** The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A tree of life is she to those who grasp her, and those who hold her are deemed happy*. This verse describes Wisdom, traditionally identified with Torah. Both Torah and the Tree of Life symbolize *Tif'eret*, the core of all seven lower *sefirot*.

3. **Whoever engages in Torah gains freedom from all…** The full verse in Exodus reads: *The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets*. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:3: "חרות (*Ḥarut*), *Engraved, upon the tablets*. Do not read חרות (*ḥarut*), *engraved*, but rather: חירות (*ḥeirut*), *freedom*. Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Neḥemiah, and the Rabbis: Rabbi Yehudah said, 'Freedom from the Angel of Death.' Rabbi Neḥemiah said, 'Freedom from kingdoms.' The Rabbis said, 'Freedom from suffering.'"

Freedom and liberation are associated with the *sefirah* of *Binah*, who is symbolized by the Jubilee. (See below, pp. 681–82, n. 62.) *Binah* is the source of *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by Torah and the Tree of Life.

On *ḥarut* and *ḥeirut*, see *Avot* 6:2; BT *Eruvin* 54a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:6; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 16, *Eqev* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 9; *Shemot Rabbah* 41:7; *Zohar* 1:37b, 63b, 131b–132a, 152b; 2:45b, 113b–114a, 183a; 3:6b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 25 (29–30).

4. **Within Torah is power of the right…** Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who balances the polar opposites *Ḥesed* (the divine right) and *Gevurah* (the divine left), thereby including left in right. The wicked upset this balance, threatening the stability of the upper and lower worlds.

The verse in Deuteronomy (linking Torah with God's right) reads in full: *YHVH from Sinai came and He shone from*

Seir upon them; He radiated from Mount Paran and He arrived from myriads of holy ones; from His right hand, a fiery law for them. In the *Zohar*, the phrase *a fiery law* alludes to *Gevurah* on the left; so the verse combines right and left. See *Zohar* 1:243a; 2:81a, 84a–b, 135a, 166b, 206b; 3:182a. On this verse, see also *Zohar* 1:198a; 3:93b.

On left being included in right, see also *Zohar* 1:17a, 119b; 2:26b, 52b, 57a–b, 66a, 162b, 168b–169a, 223a, 231a, 257a (*Heikh*); 3:17b, 24a, 118b, 178a–b, 236b; *ZḤ* 44a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 254; Wolfson, "Left Contained in the Right."

5. **Aaron is right; Levites are left…** Aaron (and all priests) symbolize *Ḥesed* on the right, whereas Levites symbolize *Gevurah* on the left. Korah the Levite challenged Moses and Aaron, saying, *You have too much! For all the community are holy, all of them, and YHVH is in their midst. Why should you raise yourselves up over YHVH's assembly?* (Numbers 16:3). Thereby, he sought the priesthood (on the right) for himself (a Levite, on the left). See *Zohar* 1:17a–b.

Furthermore, by harshly criticizing Moses—saying *Why should you raise yourselves up over YHVH's assembly?*—Korah was committing the sin of evil speech (or "the evil tongue"). For the context in Numbers, see below, note 7.

6. **Left is always included in right…** So that the harshness of Judgment (on the left) may be assuaged by *Ḥesed* (on the right). By seeking greater power for the Levites (on the left), Korah was threatening this cosmic arrangement, endangering all. Fittingly, he was "eliminated from above and below," perishing here below and losing his share above in the world that is coming. According to M *Sanhedrin* 10:3 (in the name of Rabbi Akiva), "The company of Korah has no share in the world that is coming."

7. ***Korah took…*** The transitive verb *took* has no direct object, which stimulated the midrashic imagination. Here Rabbi Yehudah indicates that "*Korah took* evil counsel for

himself.” He sought the priesthood, “which was not his,” and thereby lost his own status as a Levite and his very life.

On the principle “If anyone chases after something that is not his…” as applied specifically to Korah, see *Tosefta Sotah* 4:19; BT *Sotah* 9b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:5; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 18, p. 334.

On midrashic readings of *Korah took*, see, e.g., BT *Sanhedrin* 109b; *Tanḥuma, Qoraḥ* 1–3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qoraḥ* 2, 4–6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:2–4; Rashi on Numbers 16:1. On Korah taking bad advice (from his wife), see *Tanḥuma, Qoraḥ* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qoraḥ* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:4.

Instead of עיטא (*eita*), “counsel,” a number of witnesses (including L3, N49, Mantua, and Cremona) read מנא (*mana*), which may be based on Hebrew מנה (*manah*), “a portion.” Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 109b: “[*Korah*] *took*. Resh Lakish said, “He took a bad מקח (*miqqaḥ*), bargain [or: purchase], for himself.”

The context in Numbers (16:1–3) reads: *Korah son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi took* [or: *took up*; *betook himself*], *along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—descendants of Reuben—and they rose up before Moses, together with two hundred fifty men of the Children of Israel, chieftains of the community, persons called up to meeting, men of renown. They assembled against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have too much! For all the community are holy, all of them, and YHVH is in their midst. Why should you raise yourselves up over YHVH’s assembly?”*

8. **Korah engaged in dispute…** He impaired the harmony between right and left above, and he quarreled bitterly below. Peace is one of God’s names, and here it signifies *Tif’eret* (also known as *YHVH*, “the Holy Name”) who harmonizes right and left.

As mentioned above (note 6), according to M *Sanhedrin* 10:3, “The company of Korah has no share in the world that is coming.” On the harmony between right and left, see

above, notes 4–6. On Peace as God's name, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; BT *Berakhot* 55b, *Shabbat* 10b.

9. **The world exists only by peace…** So its endurance was assured only with the arrival of the first Sabbath, which brought peace.

Peace symbolizes not only *Tif'eret*, but its extension, *Yesod*, who is identified with Sabbath. *Yesod* also mediates between right and left, as well as uniting *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

On the world being established on peace, see M *Avot* 1:18, in the name of Rabban Shim'on son of Gamliel: "The world stands on three things: on justice, on truth, and on peace." On *Yesod* (the divine phallus) as Peace, cf. BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as "peacemaker of the home." See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:5; *Zohar* 3:31a, 115b.

10. **Zelophehad quarreled with Sabbath…** According to Numbers 15:32, *The Children of Israel were in the desert, and they found a man gathering* עצים (*etsim*), *wood, on the Sabbath day*. The Bible does not record the name of the Sabbath wood-gatherer, but according to rabbinic tradition it was Zelophehad son of Hepher, who died without sons and whose five daughters then approached Moses, asking that their father's inheritance be granted to them. See Numbers 27:1–11.

The simple sense of *etsim* in this verse is obviously *wood*, but here Rabbi Yehudah plays on its other meaning: "trees." Zelophehad was *gathering* other *trees*—namely angelic or demonic forces that rule on the weekdays (empowered by *Shekhinah*). By working on the Sabbath, Zelophehad was stimulating and empowering these lower forces, which detract from the holy peacefulness of Sabbath. See above, pp. 7–8, nn. 17–18.

11. ***Great peace have they who love Your Torah…*** But Korah damaged the sefirotic harmony above and the harmony of the Israelite community on earth; so he lost his

share in the world that is coming and his very life on earth below.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Great peace have they who love Your Torah, and nothing can make them stumble*. The verse in Proverbs describes Wisdom, traditionally identified with Torah. It reads in full: *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*.

12. ***They rose up before Moses…*** Korah's faction includes קריאי מועד (*qeri'ei mo'ed*), *persons called to the assembly*, namely heads of clans. In this verse the word קריאי (*qeri'ei*) is spelled without the first י (*yod*): קראי (*qeri'ei*), and Rabbi Shim'on interprets this deficient spelling as alluding to *Shekhinah*, who possesses nothing of Her own but only what She receives from the *sefirot* above Her. The earthly kingdom—namely the arrangement of the Israelite tribes below—resembles *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut*, "(the Heavenly) Kingdom."

The sefirotic crowns from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*—associated with the Holy Name *YHVH*—are summoned from *Ḥokhmah*, who is known as *holiness*. This happens at a time of *mo'ed* (which means not only *assembly* but also *festival*, or "appointed time")—namely on Sabbaths and festivals. Just as these divine crowns are summoned from *Ḥokhmah*, so *Shekhinah* ("lower *holiness*") summons Her angelic forces and crowns them. She Herself is associated with *mo'ed*.

See *Zohar* 3:93b–94a. The saying "The kingdom on earth resembles the Kingdom of Heaven" appears in BT *Berakhot* 58a, in the name of Rav Sheshet.

On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *These are the appointed times of YHVH*, מקראי קדש (*miqra'ei qodesh*), *sacred convocations, which you shall proclaim at their appointed times*.

13. **Higher *holiness* is known…** It is well known that the term *holiness* refers to *Ḥokhmah*, but *Shekhinah* (who is identified as *Ḥokhmat Shelomoh*, "Wisdom of Solomon") is called

“lower *holiness*.” On Sabbaths and festivals, She summons all Her angelic forces to be crowned with Her *holiness*.

14. **Just as Her forces stand above…** The Israelite chieftains below resemble the angels above, who stand near *Shekhinah*; so these chieftains are called *qeri’ei mo’ed, persons called from mo’ed*, namely invited by *Shekhinah* to receive illumination. Their earthly status (“below”) is signified by the deficient spelling of the word קראי (*qeri’ei*), which alludes to *Shekhinah* (in “the pattern above”), since She is the lowest *sefirah* and lacks any emanation of Her own. See above, note 12.

15. ***Men of* שם (*shem*), *name*, surely…** The simple sense of this phrase is *men of renown*, but here Rabbi Shim’on reads it hyperliterally as *men of name*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as the Divine Name. The Israelite chieftains were linked with Her, not with *Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH*). *Shekhinah* derives from *Gevurah*.

The verse in Leviticus reads in full: ונקב (*Ve-noqev*), *He who pronounces, the name of YHVH shall surely be put to death. The whole community shall surely stone him; sojourner and native alike, if he pronounces the Name, he shall be put to death*. According to the *Zohar*, in this verse the verb *noqev* means *pierces*, referring to someone who impairs *Shekhinah*, the Divine Name.

In the concluding sentence, the clause “they took for themselves” may refer to “taking bad counsel” (as above at note 7). Alternatively, it alludes to the grave sin of separating *Shekhinah* from the other *sefirot*, by “piercing the Name.” See Vol. 8, p. 193, n. 403; above, p. 8, n. 17.

On the meaning of the root נקב (*nqv*), see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 3:2107–8, 2117–18. On “piercing the Name,” see *Zohar* 3:106a, 113b. Cf. 1:37a; 3:191b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 360.

16. ***Come morning…*** The context in Numbers (16:4–7) reads: *Moses heard and fell on his face. He spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, “Come morning, YHVH will*

make known who is His and who is holy, and will bring him close to Himself, and him whom He chooses He will bring close to Himself. Do this: take fire-pans for yourselves, Korah and all your company, and place fire in them and put incense on them before YHVH tomorrow. And the man whom YHVH chooses, he is the holy one. You have too much, sons of Levi!"

Rabbi Shim'on explains that the description *holy* alludes to priests, whereas *pure* alludes to the Levites. The priests are symbolized by *Ḥesed*, whose flowing light is associated with *morning*, whereas the Levites are symbolized by *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). By saying *Come morning…*, Moses was challenging Korah to prove whether he was destined to remain on the side of *Ḥesed*, pertaining to priests.

The clause "*Who is His*—unspecified" means that the Levite is not described specifically as *holy*. On the distinction between *holy* and *pure*, cf. *Zohar* 3:127b, 180b.

17. **By קטרת (*qetoret*), incense…** The *Zohar* often associates *qetoret* with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), "to tie, bind," indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*. By offering incense, the priest serves as שושבינא (*shoshevina*), "the best man (or intimate friend)," of *Shekhinah*, ensuring Her union with *Tif'eret* (and the *sefirot* surrounding Him).

On *qetoret* and the Aramaic root *qtr*, see *Zohar* 1:230a; 2:219a; 3:11a–b, 30a–b, 37b, 58b, 151b, 177b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 86–87. On the priest (or Aaron the priest) as *shoshevina*, "the best man (or intimate friend)," of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:49b, 3:20a (*RM*), 53b, 124a, 177b, 180b, 275b.

18. ***They fell on their faces…*** The full verse reads: *They fell on their faces and said, "El, God of the spirits for all flesh! If one man sins, will You rage against the whole community?"*

19. **Moses and Aaron surrendered themselves to death…** By falling on their faces and calling out to God, they were surrendering their souls to *Shekhinah*, who is identified as the Tree of Death. The "defective" spelling of הרוחת (*ha-ruḥot*)—without the second ו (*vav*)—alludes to *Shekhinah*, who "lacks" any light of Her own and depends entirely on what She receives from the higher *sefirot*. The letter *vav* may allude here specifically to *Tif'eret*, who is identified as the Tree of Life. *Shekhinah* expresses divine wrath, as indicated by the verse in Psalms.

The phrase "falling on the face" alludes to the rabbinic prayer known as *Taḥanun* (Supplication), which is recited on most weekdays immediately following the cantor's repetition of the *Amidah*. This includes a confession of sins and a petition for grace. This prayer is also called *nefilat appayim* (falling upon the face, prostration), and originally it was recited in this position, though later it became customary to recite *Taḥanun* in a seated (or half-seated) posture with lowered head and one's face buried in the bend of the arm. See Vol. 8, pp. 279–80, n. 94.

On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:8a, 91a, 177a; 248b–249a; 2:147a, 251a (*Heikh*); 3:30b, 119b, 210b.

20. **the place of souls of the world…** After death, all souls return to *Shekhinah*, from whom they originally issued into the world.

21. ***Listen, you sages, to my words…*** After Job's three companions reprove him, Elihu begins to speak. The three others did not console Job properly, convincing him to accept his suffering as God's true judgment.

On the failure of Job's companions to console him, see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 58b; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 23.

22. ***far be from God any wickedness, from Shaddai any wrong…*** The name אל (*El*), *God*, refers to *Shekhinah*, as in the verse from Psalms (see above, note 19). The name שדי

(*Shaddai*), refers to *Yesod*, who is "close to that one," namely adjacent to *Shekhinah*. The compound name אל שדי (*El Shaddai*) thus designates the union of *Shekhinah* and *Yesod*.

23. **כי פועל אדם ישלם לו (*Ki fo'al adam yeshallem lo*)...** The simple sense of this verse is *For a human's acts* [meaning: *For according to a human's acts*] *He repays him, and by a person's path He treats him*. But Rabbi Yehudah reads the first half of the verse hyperliterally: *Ki fo'al adam yeshallem lo, For a human's act repays him*—that is, his act itself repays him.

24. ***If he sets his heart on Him...*** The verse as it stands in the Masoretic text is difficult. Here, Rabbi Yehudah interprets it to mean *If he sets his heart on* returning to *Him*, then when he dies *his spirit and soul He gathers to Him*—within *Shekhinah*, who is known as "the Bundle of Life." Such a soul will not be judged and punished by harsh or demonic forces. On "the Bundle of Life," see above, p. 15, n. 39.

25. **This utterance is another mystery...** Elihu's statement alludes to a deep mystery, namely the process of reincarnation. According to the *Zohar*, this process is required especially when a man dies without having fulfilled the first commandment of the Torah: procreation. In such a case, the childless person's spirit wanders the upper worlds aimlessly, barred from entering the divine realm. This spirit can be redeemed only if the deceased man's brother performs levirate marriage: marrying the widowed wife, impregnating her, and consciously drawing the homeless spirit into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the spirit with another opportunity to fulfill itself on earth. On levirate marriage and reincarnation, see above, pp. 98–99, n. 140; Vol. 5, p. 38, n. 108.

26. **מי פקד עליו ארצה (*Mi faqad alav artsah*)...** The simple sense of this rhetorical question is *Who assigned the earth to Him?* but Rabbi Yose construes this as *Whom did He assign for him on earth?*—that is, "Whom did God designate

for this person who died childless?" The answer is "his brother," who can redeem his soul by performing levirate marriage.

The conclusion of the verse is understood as *and set up the whole world?* This now refers to the brother's virtuous act of restoring the soul and thereby initiating a new household. The image of building (in the context of levirate marriage) derives from Deuteronomy 25:9. Cf. Genesis 16:2; 30:3.

On the phrase "his brother, who is close to him," see *Zohar* 1:187a (standard editions), quoting Deuteronomy 25:5. Cf. Ruth 3:12. The verse in Job reads: *Who assigned the earth to Him, and placed the whole world in His charge* [or: *and set up the whole world*]?

27. ***If he sets his heart on him…*** This now implies that the brother of the deceased must perform levirate marriage with pure intention: focusing on his brother's soul, not on the physical beauty of his brother's widow.

On performing levirate marriage with ulterior motives, see BT *Yevamot* 39b, 109a. Cf. *ZḤ* 88d (*MhN, Rut*). On the verse in Job, cf. *ZḤ* 89d–90a (*MhN, Rut*).

28. ***his spirit and soul He gathers to him…*** Rabbi Yose construes the verse as *his spirit and soul* (namely of the deceased brother) *He gathers to him*—that is, God draws these *to him*, to the fetus engendered by the act of levirate marriage.

29. ***All flesh will expire together…*** The body of the deceased brother will decompose; but *the human* (namely his soul) *will return to dust*—that is, it will enter a new body, metaphorically composed of the dust of the earth.

See Genesis 2:7: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being*. See Genesis 3:19: *For dust you are, and to dust shall you return*. Cf. below, p. 192 at n. 16; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 357.

30. **who has compassion on human beings…** By the process of reincarnation, God enables the human soul to return and fulfill itself on earth in a second lifetime. See above, note 25. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 18.

31. ***Moses said to Aaron…*** In the biblical context, on the day after Korah and his faction are swallowed up by the earth, the Israelites complain against Moses and Aaron, saying, *You, you have put to death YHVH's people* (Numbers 17:6.) God then attacks the people with a plague.

The full verse here reads: *Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire-pan and place fire upon it from the altar and put in incense and carry it quickly to the community and atone for them, for the fury has gone forth from before YHVH, the plague has begun!"*

32. **For every single day, deeds mount the scales…** On the theme of constant judgment, see *Tosefta Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:13; JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57a; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16a; *Zohar* 2:99b.

33. **when Moses saw wrath impending…** He realized that God was inflicting a plague upon the people, so he instructed Aaron to offer incense, which assuages wrath and brings peace.

The *Zohar* often associates *qetoret* with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), "to tie, bind," indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*. By offering incense, Aaron serves as שושבינא (*shoshevina*), "the best man (or intimate friend)," of *Shekhinah*, ensuring Her union with *Tif'eret* (and the *sefirot* surrounding Him). See above, note 17. On *Shekhinah*'s title *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

According to BT *Shabbat* 89a (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), the Angel of Death himself transmitted the secret of incense to Moses. On Aaron's role as a passionate peacemaker, see M *Avot* 1:12, in the name of Hillel: "Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving human beings and drawing them

near Torah." See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:37, 45d–46a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; B, 24–25; BT *Yoma* 71b, *Sanhedrin* 6b; *Zohar* 3:60a, 88a.

34. **joy of above and below…** Incense stimulates sefirotic union and delights *Shekhinah*, who is sometimes pictured as *the heart*.

On the verse in Proverbs, see *Tanḥuma, Tetsavveh* 15; *Zohar* 1:230a; 3:8a, 11a, 30b, 34a, 58b, 89a (*Piq*), 105a, 149a, 150a, 151b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 86–87.

35. ***Do not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites…*** Kohath was one of Levi's three sons, and his clan was entrusted with the task of carrying the most sacred objects of the Dwelling, or Tabernacle (such as the ark, table, candelabra, and altars). In order to ensure that the Kohathites were not *cut off from the midst of the Levites* (that is, struck dead), the sacred objects were first wrapped carefully by the priests before the Kohathites entered the sacred area, so that the Levitical porters would not touch any of these objects directly or even see them exposed.

Once the sacred objects are covered by the priest(s), a spiritual cover descends. Anything secret or silent pertains to the priests (such as meditating over the sacrificial offerings), whereas revealed and audible actions pertain to the Levites (especially chanting psalms).

On the quiet (or silent) quality of priestly service, see *Zohar* 3:39a, 88b, 146a, 147a. Cf. below, note 37. See also the Geonic tradition quoted by Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1:47: "[A priest] who spreads out his hands should not bless '… who has sanctified us [with the holiness of Aaron and commanded us to bless His people Israel in love]' loudly but rather quietly." See Albeck's note, ad loc.; Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:94.

The context in Numbers (4:17–20) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Do not let the tribe of the*

clans of the Kohathites be cut off from the midst of the Levites. This shall you do for them, that they live and not die when they draw near the holy of holies [or: *the most sacred objects*]: *Aaron and his sons shall come and assign them, each one, to his workload. They shall not come in to see the sanctuary* [or: *the sacred objects*] *for even a moment and die*."

36. **wine is forbidden to them…** Since drinking wine loosens tongues, stimulating a loud voice—which pertains not to the priests but to the Levites. The former are associated with *Ḥesed* (Love), whereas the latter are associated with *Din* (Judgment)—which is announced publicly, just as singing is normally revealed and public.

On wine's being forbidden to the priests, see Leviticus 10:9: *Drink no wine or beer, you and your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, lest you die*. On the association of wine with the Levites' singing, see BT *Berakhot* 35a, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan, "[The Levites] sing a song only over wine [that is, when wine is poured as a libation on the altar]." See *Zohar* 3:39a.

On the revelatory quality of wine, see BT *Sanhedrin* 38a, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya: "When wine enters, a secret emerges," based on the fact that יין (*yayin*), "wine," and סוד (*sod*), "secret," are numerically equivalent, both equaling seventy. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:4; BT *Eruvin* 65a; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:8; 11:1; *Zohar* 3:39a.

37. **Let the left thrust away…** In its rabbinic context, this saying is applied, for example, to a disciple who has strayed or to the evil impulse, which should not be rejected totally but rather given the opportunity for restoration or transformation. Here Rabbi El'azar applies the saying to the *sefirot*: *Din* (Judgment), on the left (associated with the Levites), "thrusts away," executing punishment; whereas *Ḥesed* (Love) on the right (associated with the priests), "draws near," mollifying Judgment. The priest achieves such

“drawing near” by offering incense silently on the inner altar.

The altar for animal sacrifices stood in the courtyard in front of the Tabernacle (and later in front of the Temple Sanctuary), whereas the incense altar was placed within the Tabernacle (and later within the Temple Sanctuary). The outer altar symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whereas the inner altar symbolizes *Binah*. On the silent quality of the incense offering, see BT *Yoma* 44a, *Zevaḥim* 88b, *Arakhin* 16a.

On the rabbinic saying “Always let the left hand thrust away and the right hand draw near,” see *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:6; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 29b; BT *Sotah* 47a, *Sanhedrin* 107b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 31; *Rut Rabbah* 2:16; *Midrash Tehillim* 22:5; *Zohar* 2:106b.

38. **When this other altar begins to flare…** When *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the outer, sacrificial altar) begins to flare in Judgment (conveying this quality from *Din*), *Binah* (symbolized by the inner, incense altar) mollifies Judgment.

39. **When the sons of Kohath carry the most sacred objects…** As explained above (note 35).

Most of the sacred vessels were covered by cloths dyed with the color תכלת (*tekhelet*), (purple; or bluish purple; violet; blue). See Numbers 4:4–15. On the significance of *tekhelet*, see above, p. 162, n. 31.

The ark, display table, and both altars were fitted with rings to hold the carrying poles that made them portable. On the wording “and they approach only those poles protruding,” cf. Naḥmanides on Numbers 4:20; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

The verse in Numbers reads: *Aaron and his sons shall finish covering the sacred objects* [or: *the sanctuary*] *and the sacred vessels* [or: *the vessels of the sanctuary*] *when the camp journeys onward, and afterward the sons of Kohath shall come to carry, so that they do not touch the holy* [or: *the sanctuary; the sacred objects*] *and die*.

40. **So incense—which is innermost…** Incense was offered on the inner altar, and its secret, silent quality befits the priest. (See above, notes 35, 37.)

The phrase *between the dead and the living* now alludes to *Shekhinah* (pictured as the Tree of Death) and *Tif'eret* (pictured as the Tree of Life). The priest (symbolizing *Ḥesed* on the right) *stood between* the divine couple and, by offering incense, stimulated their union. See above, note 33.

According to BT *Shabbat* 89a (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), the Angel of Death himself transmitted the secret of incense to Moses. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

The context in Numbers (17:12–13) reads: *Aaron took as Moses had spoken, and he ran into the midst of the assembly, and, look, the plague had begun among the people! He put in incense and atoned for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was halted*.

41. **Left always serves right…** Thus, the Levites (on the left) serve the priests (on the right). The verse in Numbers, addressed to Aaron, indicates that the Levites *will serve you*. Cf. above, notes 4–6.

42. ***Enjoy life with a woman whom you love…*** Rabbi El'azar is troubled by the advice to enjoy a sexual relationship.

Traditionally, Solomon is regarded as the author of Ecclesiastes. To early rabbinic authorities, some of his statements there seemed shocking or even heretical. See above, pp. 11–12, n. 28.

The full verse reads: *Enjoy* [literally: *See*] *life with a woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life that He has granted you under the sun, all your fleeting days, for that is your share in life and in your toil that you toil under the sun*. On this verse, see *Zohar* 1:196b.

43. **a person should fuse *life* with this place…** Rabbi Shim'on explains the deeper meaning of the verse. One should join *Tif'eret* (pictured as *life* and the Tree of Life) with *Shekhinah*, the divine *woman*. *Tif'eret* is symbolized by day, and *Shekhinah* by night. By uniting the divine couple, one participates in their joy and attains true *life*, which settles only upon *Shekhinah* and, through Her, flows to those who stimulate divine union.

On the wording "A person should include the quality of day with night…," cf. BT *Berakhot* 11b, where Rava and Abbaye indicate that light is mentioned in the evening prayers, and darkness in the morning prayers "in order to mention the quality of day during the night and the quality of night during the day." See BT *Berakhot* 12a; *Zohar* 1:12b, 120b; 2:162a; 3:260b.

44. ***And in your toil…*** In all mundane activities, one should strive to focus on uniting the divine couple.

See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 63a, in the name of Bar Kappara: "What is a short passage upon which depend all the essential components of Torah? *In all your ways know Him, and He will smooth your paths*."

For the full verse in Ecclesiastes, see the end of note 42. The verse in Proverbs reads: *In all your ways know Him, and He will smooth* [or: *level, straighten*] *your paths*.

45. **All the words of King Solomon…** All the biblical writings attributed to him convey wisdom—even this passage in Ecclesiastes, which seems to encourage hedonism and remove all restraint.

See above, note 42. The image of the lash being untied derives from the judicial punishment of flogging. See M *Makkot* 3:12; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 28:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:1; 24:14; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:3; 11:9; *Midrash Mishlei* 25:1; *Zohar* 1:196b.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All that your hand finds to do, do with your power* [or: *All that your hand finds to do with your power, do*]*; for there is no doing or reckoning or*

knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, where you are going. The term *Sheol* means "the netherworld; the abode of the dead."

46. **a person should include left within right…** Acting in such a way that he subdues harshness (on the left) with loving-kindness (on the right). In the verse from Ecclesiastes, *your power* alludes to the right hand, based on the association of *right hand* and *power* in the verse from Exodus. Consequently, the phrase *your hand* must refer to the other hand, namely the left.

On left being included in right, see above, note 4. On *hand* as indicating the left hand, see Judges 5:26; Isaiah 48:13; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 6:8; BT *Menaḥot* 36b; *Tanḥuma, Bo* 14; Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 13:9 (quoting Moses ben Samuel ha-Kohen Gikatilla); *Zohar* 2:48a; 3:184a. Cf. BT *Menaḥot* 37a; Vol. 7, p. 311, n. 180. The verse in Exodus reads in full: *Your right hand, O YHVH, is glorious in power. Your right hand, O YHVH, smashes the enemy*.

47. **A person should not say…** One should not wait until the afterlife to plead for God's mercy and turn back in *teshuvah*, because *there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol*—that is, there is no opportunity for performing good deeds, for *reckoning* one's own actions, or for acquiring *knowledge or wisdom*.

48. **In Hell there are habitations…** As mentioned above (note 45), the biblical term שאול (*she'ol*) means "the netherworld, the abode of the dead," sometimes paired with אבדון (*avaddon*), "destruction, ruin," which may refer to a distinct area of the underworld reserved for the wicked. According to rabbinic tradition, there are seven divisions of Hell, two of which are Sheol and Avadon. Here, Avadon refers to the lowest level of Hell, directly beneath Sheol.

On the seven divisions of Hell, see BT *Sotah* 10b; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 52; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 62b, 237b; 2:150b, 263a–68b

(*Heikh*); 3:54b, 285b–286a; *ZḤ* 25b (*MhN*), 79b (*MhN, Rut*); *Beit ha-Midrash* 1:149; 5:50; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:20, n. 56. Seven names for Hell are listed in BT *Eruvin* 19a. On Sheol and Avadon, see Proverbs 15:11; Job 26:6. Cf. Revelation 9:11, where Avadon is the name of *the angel of the bottomless pit*.

On the image of "squealing" in Hell, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b–17a, in the name of the House of Shammai: "There are three groups at the Day of Judgment: one of the completely righteous, one of the completely wicked, and one of the intermediate. The completely righteous are written and sealed immediately for life; the completely wicked are written and sealed immediately for Hell…; the intermediate go down to Hell ומצפצפין (*u-mtsaftsefin*), and squeal [or: chirp, twitter, squawk—on account of their punishment], and rise." See *Zohar* 2:150a–b; *ZḤ* 25d (*MhN*), 33d, 69a (*ShS*). The full verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH puts to death and brings to life* [or: *and grants life*; *and keeps alive*], *brings down to Sheol and raises up*.

49. **Every single night, before he lies down…** Before going to sleep, a worthy person should make an accounting of his day's activities and turn back in *teshuvah*. Night is ruled by *Shekhinah*, pictured as the Tree of Death.

On nightly reckoning and *teshuvah*, see *Zohar* 1:191a; *ZḤ* 21d (*MhN*). Cf. Vol. 8, p. 175, n. 343. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19. On sleep as a taste of death, see BT *Berakhot* 57b: "Sleep is one-sixtieth of death." See above, p. 2, n. 5.

50. **So, *there is no doing or reckoning…*** As mentioned above (note 47), there is no opportunity in Sheol for performing good deeds, for *reckoning* one's own actions, or for acquiring *knowledge or wisdom*. Correspondingly, those who have engaged in these virtuous pursuits during their lifetime are saved from Sheol, and instead they inherit the bliss of the Garden of Eden. On

God's nightly encounter with the souls of the righteous, see above, p. 3, n. 6.

51. ***He who is enthroned…*** The full verse reads: *He who is enthroned above* חוג (*ḥug*), *the vault of, the earth, and its inhabitants seem like grasshoppers; who spread out the skies like gauze, stretched them out like a tent to dwell in*.

Both verses in Proverbs are spoken by Wisdom, often identified with Torah. Proverbs 8:30 reads in full: *I was by him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling* [or: *intimate, confidant, artisan*]; *I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times*. According to a midrashic tradition, here Torah declares that she served as God's blueprint for Creation, or His architect.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, in the name of Rabbi Osha'ya: "*I was by Him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*…אמון (*amon*)—אומן (*umman*), *an artisan*. Torah says, 'I was the artistic tool of the blessed Holy One.' According to the custom of the world, when a mortal king builds a palace he does not build it by his own skill but rather by the skill of an architect. And the architect does not build it out of his own knowledge, but rather has parchments and tablets [with plans and diagrams] to know how to make the rooms and doors. Similarly, the blessed Holy One gazed into Torah and created the world."

See M *Avot* 3:14; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 29, p. 160; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 5; *Zohar* 1:5a, 47a, 134a–b; 2:161a–b, 200a, 205b, 217a; 3:35b, 61b, 65b, 67b, 152a, 285b; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:242–45, 266–69.

Proverbs 8:27 reads in full: *When He founded the heavens, I was there, when He traced ḥug, a circle, on the face of the deep*.

52. **When He came to create Adam…** Cf. *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3: "When the blessed Holy One wished to make the human being, He said to Torah, '*Let us make a human*… (Genesis 1:26).' She said before Him, 'Master of the Universe! The human who You wish to make is *few of days*

and sated with turmoil (Job 14:1); he will come to sin. Unless You are forbearing with him, it would be better that he not come into the world.' He replied, 'Is it for nothing that I am called *slow to anger and abounding in love* (Exodus 34:6)?'"

Here the *Zohar* attributes the rhetorical question "Is it for nothing…?" to Torah, rather than to God.

On Adam's original splendor, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:6; *Rut Rabbah* (ed. Lerner) 8:3; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 18, 25; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:12.

On the creatures' fear of, and subservience to, Adam, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11; *Zohar* 1:13b, 38a, 71a, 191a; 2:54b–55a, 125b; 3:107b, 117a; *ZḤ* 38c; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 309, 337–38. Cf. Genesis 9:2; *Tosefta Shabbat* 17:19; *Bereshit Rabbah* 34:12; BT *Shabbat* 151b.

On the passage in *Tanḥuma* quoted above, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:26; *Zohar* 1:205a–b 3:35b, 69b. Cf. 1:134a–b. The context in Exodus (34:6–7) reads: *YHVH passed before his face and called out, "YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*], *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*] *and truth* [or: *faithfulness*], *keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, removing iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations."*

53. **the day was sanctified…** At sunset when the Sabbath day began, *Shekhinah* (pictured as a throne) was prepared for King *Tif'eret*.

54. **spirits of the demons emerged…** See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 17: "It is not written here [*He ceased from all His work*] *that* [*God*] *had created and made*, but rather [*that God had created*] לעשות (*la'asot*), *to make* (Genesis 2:3), for the Sabbath came first and their work

[i.e., *all His work* of Creation] was not completed. Rabbi Benaya said, 'This refers to the demons, for He created their souls; and as He was creating their bodies, the Sabbath day was hallowed. He left them, and they remained soul without body.'"

Here Rabbi Abba indicates that since the demons' bodies were left uncreated, in a sense "the world remained defective," specifically on the left side, the source of demonic forces. When the nation of Israel was fully arrayed —with priests symbolizing the right side, Levites symbolizing the left, and the rest of Israel symbolizing the center—"then that defect of the world on the left was rectified."

On the passage in *Tanḥuma*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; 11:9; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:14a, 47b–48a, 178a; 2:155b, 178b (*SdTs*); 3:19a, 43a, 48b, 142b (*IR*); *ZḤ* 32d–33a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 397. Cf. M *Avot* 5:6: "Ten things were created on Friday eve at twilight:… Some say, 'Also the demons.'"

55. **Therefore the Levites must be purified…** So that they will fulfill the left side (representing *Din*) and include it in the right side (representing *Ḥesed*).

According to its simple sense, the verse in Numbers reads ועבד הלוי הוא (*Ve-avad ha-levi hu*), *The Levite, he alone, will serve, at the Tent of Meeting*. Here Rabbi Abba explains that the emphatic appearance of the pronoun *hu, he*, underscores the vital role of the Levite, who "completes the left side," thereby rectifying "the defect of the world." The direction "north" often symbolizes *Din* on the left; here it signifies the demonic forces stemming from that side. The ark often symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

On the north as not being completed at Creation, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3; *ZḤ* 60d (*MhN, ShS*). Cf. BT *Bava Batra* 25a–b; *Midrash Tadshe* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:165).

On the sefirotic reading of the verse in Numbers, see above, p. 130, n. 234. On left being included in right, see

above, note 4.

56. **Furthermore, *hu, he*—the Ancient One…** The highest sefirotic realm, known as the Holy Ancient One, is so hidden and concealed that it cannot be addressed directly (in the second person) but only indirectly (in the third), so the pronoun *hu* (*he*) alludes to it. Now the verse implies *The Levite will serve hu, he* [or: *him*]—that is, by representing *Din* (Judgment), the Levite ensures that judgment and justice will prevail in the world, and that people will believe in the reality of the *sefirot* (including its highest realm) and engage in Torah and fulfill the *mitsvot*.

On *hu* as designating *Keter*, see *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:129b–130a (*IR*), 134b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*). Cf. above, p. 130 at n. 234 (where it alludes to *Binah*).

57. **Furthermore, *Ve-avad ha-levi hu, The Levite will serve, he*…** The word *hu* (*he*) can also allude to how this pronoun functions in the verse from Deuteronomy: כי יהוה הוא האלהים (*ki YHVH hu ha-Elohim*), *that YHVH, He is Elohim*—linking *YHVH* (which signifies *Tif'eret*) with *Elohim* (which signifies *Shekhinah*). Thus, the Levite stimulates union between the divine couple. Specifically, he symbolizes *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—the divine left hand, which reaches out toward *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH—He is Elohim, God; there is none besides Him*. On the sefirotic significance of *YHVH—He is Elohim*, see *Zohar* 2:161a–b. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me*.

58. **הוא (*Hu*), *He, made us*…** Rabbi Abba may be suggesting that in this verse *hu* (*He*) alludes to *Keter*.

In the biblical text, the verse in Psalms is written: *He made us*, ולא אנחנו (*ve-lo anaḥnu*), *and not we ourselves*. According to a Masoretic note, however, the verse should be read *He made us* ולו אנחנו (*ve-lo anaḥnu*), *and we are His*. Cf. the reading suggested in *Bahir* 96 (141): ולא׳ אנחנו (*ve-la-alef*

anaḥnu), *and we belong to the* *alef*, namely to oneness. See Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 105, n. 3; *Zohar* 1:120b; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:134b (*IR*), 183b.

59. ***hu*** **below,** ***hu*** **above…** The various preceding interpretations of *hu* span below (alluding to the Levite, or *Gevurah*) and above (*Keter*), which are respectively revealed and concealed. On the clause *Hu ha-Elohim*, see above, note 57. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Derekh Emet*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

60. **The blessed Holy One will one day illumine the moon…** In the final redemption, the light of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) will be as great as that of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun).

Cf. BT *Ḥullin* 60b. On the primordial light of Creation, see below, pp. 321–22, n. 79. The context in Isaiah 60 (19–20) reads: *No longer will you need the sun for light by day, nor the shining of the moon for radiance, for YHVH will be your light everlasting, and Your God will be your glory. Never again will your sun set, and your moon will not be withdrawn; for YHVH will be a light to you forever, and your days of mourning will be completed*.

1. ***More desirable than gold…*** The Psalmist is praising the commandments of Torah.

On the midrashic reading of the verse in Deuteronomy 27, see BT *Berakhot* 63b: "Rabbi Yehudah opened further in honor of Torah, expounding, '*Be silent and listen, Israel. This day you have become a people to YHVH your God*. Now, was it on that day that Torah was given to Israel? Was not that day the end of the forty years [of wandering]? However, this teaches you that Torah is as beloved every day to those who study it as on the day when it was given from Mount Sinai.'" See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:5; Rashi on Deuteronomy 27:9; *Zohar* 3:69a.

2. **וזאת (*Ve-zot*), *And this, is the Torah…*** Rabbi Yose explores the difference between this verse (quoted more fully at the beginning of the preceding paragraph) and the second verse of *Parashat Ḥuqqat*, which reads זאת (*Zot*), *This, is the statute of the Torah*. The wording *Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah* alludes to the union of *Shekhinah*, or Assembly of Israel (known as *zot*, *this*), and *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by Written Torah. Furthermore, the prefix *ve*, *and*, indicates *Tif'eret* (together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him, from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*), since the letter ו (*vav*) is numerically equivalent to six. So the single word *ve-zot*, *and this*, alludes to the inseparable union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7. The full verse in Numbers reads: *This is the statute of the teaching* [or: *of the Torah*] *that YHVH has commanded, saying, "Speak to the Children of Israel, that they take you a perfect red cow that has no blemish and on which no yoke has been put*." This red cow (or red heifer) was to be slaughtered; then its ashes were mixed with water, forming *waters of lustration* (Numbers 19:9), which were sprinkled upon anyone who had become defiled by contacting a human corpse.

3. ***Ve-zot, And this*—general and particular as one…** *Tif'eret* (who is male) represents the general aspect of emanation (or Written Torah), whereas *Shekhinah* (who is

female) represents the particulars (or Oral Torah). For another interpretation, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The word *zot* (*this*) alone—without the prefix *ve-* (*and*)—signifies *Shekhinah*, who is identified specifically with *the statute(s) of the Torah*, not with the Torah as a whole, since *Shekhinah* is associated with Judgment. See *Targum Onqelos*, Numbers 19:2.

This reference to "general" and "particular" derives from rabbinic hermeneutical rules concerning "a generalization" and "a specification." See *Sifra*, intro, 1, 7–9; 1a, 2a–c; *Zohar* 1:16b, 47b, 246b; 2:3a, 25a–b (*Piq*), 161b, 176a–b, 178a (*SdTs*); 3:143a (*IR*), 264a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335–36; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 107–8.

4. ***Zot, This, is what regards the Levites…*** Since the Levites derive from *Din* (Judgment) on the left side, this verse employs the simple term *zot* (*this*)—alluding to *Shekhinah*, who Herself derives from *Din*—and not the compound *ve-zot*, which would include *Tif'eret*, who is identified with Compassion.

According to the passage in Numbers (8:23–26), the Levites are to serve from age twenty-five to age fifty.

5. **But it is written: *Ve-zot, And this, shall you do for them…*** If the term *zot* (*this*)—rather than *ve-zot* (*and this*)—applies to the Levites, then what about another verse in Numbers, where *ve-zot* applies to them?

The context in Numbers (4:17–20) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Do not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be cut off from the midst of the Levites. Ve-zot, And this, shall you do for them, that they live and not die when they draw near the holy of holies* [or: *the most sacred objects*]: *Aaron and his sons shall come and assign them, each one, to his workload. They shall not come in to see the sanctuary* [or: *the sacred objects*] *for even a moment and die."* See above, pp. 177–78, n. 35.

6. **Certainly so, as proven by the verse…** Rabbi Yose explains why this particular verse, concerning the dangerous situation of the Levites, requires the wording *ve-zot* (*and this*). Since the Levites derive from the left side, they are vulnerable to harsh forces, which are potentially fatal. *Shekhinah* Herself (who is called simply *zot*, *this*) also derives from the left and is sometimes known as the Tree of Death. Therefore, this verse reads *ve-zot* (*and this*), to include *Tif'eret*—who is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*), and represents the Tree of Life and "an elixir (or drug) of life." See below at note 67. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

7. ***Ve-zot, And this, is the Torah…*** As explained above (note 2), the compound word *ve-zot, and this*, alludes to the union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, the former symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*), the latter by the feminine marker ה (*he*). The word *zot*, *this*, itself alludes to *Shekhinah*, as in the verse *Zot, This, is the statute of the Torah*. See above, note 3.

8. **Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir…** On this figure, see below, pp. 418–19, n. 402.

On Rabbi Shim'on's boldness, see *Zohar* 3:59b–60a, 61a, 79b. On he alone being permitted to reveal secrets and on his unique status, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

9. ***This is the statute of the Torah…*** The second verse of *Parashat Ḥuqqat*. For the full verse, see above, note 2.

10. **twirl the reason of levirate marriage…** That is, elucidate the meaning of the commandment of *yibbum*, "levirate marriage," and the related practice of *ḥalitsah*, "pulling off (the shoe)."

According to the biblical custom of levirate marriage, if a married man dies childless, his brother should marry the widow and then father a child who will be considered the offspring of the deceased. Posthumously providing the dead man with offspring prevents his "name" from being blotted out. In Kabbalah, levirate marriage is understood in terms of reincarnation: not only the "name" of the deceased

husband is preserved but also his soul, transmigrating into the embryo generated by the union of his widow and his brother.

According to Deuteronomy 25:9, if the deceased man's brother refuses to marry the widow, *His sister-in-law shall approach him before the eyes of the elders* וחלצה (*ve-ḥaletsah*), *and pull off, his sandal* [or: *his shoe*] *from his foot and spit in his face and speak out and say, "So shall be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house."* The act of removing the brother's shoe is known as חליצה (*ḥalitsah*), "pulling off." In biblical times, transfer of ownership entailed passing the sandal (see the following note); here in Deuteronomy, the removal of the sandal may symbolize renunciation of the brother's claim on his sister-in-law.

The term levirate derives from Latin *levir*, "husband's brother." The corresponding Hebrew term יבום (*yibbum*), "levirate marriage," similarly derives from יבם (*yabbam*), "husband's brother." On levirate marriage and reincarnation, see above, pp. 98–99, n. 140; p. 174, n. 25; Vol. 5, p. 38, n. 108. On the expression "twirl…," see Vol. 8, p. 350, n. 100; p. 411, n. 325.

11. ***And this was formerly done in Israel…*** In this biblical context, the *sandal* represents the conveying of goods or rights from one party to another. In post-biblical times, the sandal was replaced by a kerchief.

Rabbi El'azar wonders whether there is some deep significance to the sandal or whether "they were merely making an agreement," and the particular object symbolically exchanged was not important. If the latter is the case, he still wants to know why later generations "abolished" the sandal and replaced it with a kerchief. And if the Torah intended a sandal specifically, how could they possibly abolish it?

On acquisition by a kerchief, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1:361–62. On the concluding sentence, cf. BT *Eruvin* 13a, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "When I came to Rabbi Yishma'el,

he said to me, ‘My son, what is your work?’ I replied, ‘I am a scribe.’ He said to me, ‘My son, be careful in your work, for your work is the work of heaven. If perchance you omit a single letter or add a single letter, you would be destroying the whole world!” See above, p. 156, n. 13.

12. **Well, it was certainly according to the law of Torah…** The Torah intended that a sandal be exchanged, and this specific item alludes to a deep mystery.

13. ***Remove your sandals from your feet…*** The full verse records God’s command to Moses at the Burning Bush (and opens somewhat differently than how it is quoted here in the *Zohar*): *He said, “Do not come any closer! Remove your sandals* [or: *your shoes*] *from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.”* Rabbi El’azar interprets *Remove your sandals from your feet* as a euphemism for sexual abstinence. This accords with a rabbinic tradition that as a consequence of Moses’ direct encounter with God he abstained from sexual relations with his wife, Zipporah. Moses became the husband of *Shekhinah*, who is described here as “another woman, bathed in supernal radiance.” In the concluding sentence, “that shoe” refers to the identity of Moses’ spouse, either earthly or divine.

On the divine command *Remove your sandals from your feet* as implying sexual abstinence, see *Zohar* 2:222a; 3:148a; *ZḤ* 59b (*MhN*), 72d (*ShS*); Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 3:5, n. 94. Cf. 2 Samuel 11:8,11; *Zohar* 1:8b, 112b; and the Bedouin formula used in divorce proceedings (quoted by Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p. 233): “She was my slipper; I have cast her off.”

On Moses’ celibacy, see Vol. 6, p. 271, n. 27. On Moses as the husband of *Shekhinah*, see Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128. On the shoe as symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 92.

14. **whatever a dead person gives to someone…** In a dream. See BT *Berakhot* 57b: “[If one dreams of] a corpse

in the house, [this signifies] peace in the house; if [the corpse] was eating and drinking in the house, it is a good sign for the house; if he took articles from the house, it is a bad sign for the house [apparently signifying that the dead person is removing someone from the house]. Rav Papa explained this as referring to a shoe or a sandal [signifying that someone in the house is about to depart from this life]. Anything that the dead person takes away is for the good except a shoe and a sandal; anything that he places down [literally: gives] is for the good—except dust and mustard [the latter resembling dust; both signifying death and burial]."

According to Rabbi El'azar, in the verse from Song of Songs *nobleman's daughter* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who can be pictured as the *daughter* of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham, who is identified in rabbinic literature as a *nobleman*. *Shekhinah* is often associated with death (and sometimes pictured as the Tree of Death). Cf. Proverbs 5:5 (warning against the seductive *strange woman*): *Her feet descend to Death; her steps grasp Sheol*. In the *Zohar* this verse is sometimes applied to Lilith and her demonic realm (*Zohar* 1:161b [ST], 190a; 3:251b) and sometimes to *Shekhinah* (1:35b; 2:48b; 3:107b).

On the passage in *Berakhot* (and the verse in Song of Songs), see *Zohar* 3:308b (*Tosafot*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 359. That verse reads: *How lovely are your steps* [or: *your feet*] *in sandals, O nobleman's daughter!* On this verse, see also Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146. On Abraham as the *nobleman* in this verse, see BT *Sukkah* 49b, *Ḥagigah* 3a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, ad loc.

On the image of "gathering" the feet as associated with death, see Genesis 49:33: *Jacob finished instructing his sons, and he gathered his feet into the bed, and he expired and was gathered to his people*. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

15. **This is the case …** If one dreams that a dead person takes his shoe(s), this is a bad omen; but in normal, waking life, the act of removing and exchanging a shoe serves to validate a transaction and accords with the decree issuing from *Shekhinah*.

16. **The shoe of *ḥalitsah*…** On *ḥalitsah*, "pulling off (the shoe)," see above, note 10. The shoe of this ceremony differs from the shoe used to validate a transaction, but both allude to *Shekhinah*.

If a man dies without having fulfilled the commandment of procreation, his soul wanders the upper worlds aimlessly and is not "gathered in" by *Shekhinah* (the *nobleman's daughter*). However, God has mercy on him and provides an opportunity for this soul to be reincarnated through the procedure of *yibbum* (levirate marriage), so that it can fulfill itself (and the commandment of procreation) in a second lifetime. See above, note 10.

The verse in Job now implies that *the human* (namely the soul of the deceased) *will return to dust*—that is, it will enter a new body, metaphorically composed of the dust of the earth. See Genesis 2:7: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being*. See Genesis 3:19: *For dust you are, and to dust shall you return*. Cf. above, pp. 175–76, n. 29.

17. **If that redeemer is not willing…** If the deceased husband's brother refuses to marry the widow, she performs the act of *ḥalitsah* "pulling off (the shoe)." (See above, note 10.)

Here the shoe represents the opportunity of the soul of the deceased to be reincarnated. Since the living brother has refused to helped facilitate this process, the widow removes the shoe from him, demonstrating that the soul of the dead will now somehow be reincarnated without the living brother's assistance. For such a scenario, see *Zohar* 1:187b (Vol. 3, pp. 142–43, nn. 364–66); *Matoq mi-Devash*.

18. **This is the opposite of the shoe…** According to BT *Berakhot* 57b (see above, note 14), if one dreams that a dead person takes his shoe, this is a bad omen, indicating that the dreamer (or someone in the house) is about to depart from this life. But whereas in such a dream, "the dead one takes (the shoe) from the living," here in the act of *ḥalitsah*, the living widow takes the shoe "from (the brother of) the dead"—or for the sake of the dead—ensuring that the soul of the dead husband will accepted by *Shekhinah*, the Divine Woman.

The phrase "Her Husband's Crown" appears in Proverbs 12:4: *A woman of strength is her husband's crown*. Here it describes *Shekhinah*, the divine *woman of strength*, who adorns Her Husband, *Tif'eret*.

19. **She must strike that shoe on the ground…** Demonstrating that the suffering of her husband's corpse in the grave will cease, and that God will welcome his soul into heaven.

The wording "She must strike that shoe on the ground" reflects the Gaonic regulation that the widow should "throw the sandal on the ground." See *Sefer ha-Shetarot le-Rav Hai Ga'on*, 17; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yibbum* 4:6; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 359; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem.

20. **Furthermore, striking of that shoe…** To demonstrate that the brother of the deceased husband has refused to "rebuild" him through another body—metaphorically composed of the "dust" of the earth. (See above, note 16.) Rather, the soul of the deceased will now return "to his dust from which he originally came," that is, to the soul's body in the grave. Alternatively, this last clause may allude to *Shekhinah*, who is sometimes pictured as "dust." Following the ritual of *ḥalitsah*, the widow is free to marry another man.

The image of building (in the context of levirate marriage) derives from Deuteronomy 25:9. Cf. Genesis

16:2; 30:3. On *Shekhinah* as dust, see below, note 50.

21. **whoever wishes to validate a transaction…** As explained above, note 11. By this procedure, any honest and legitimate transaction is confirmed, as it were, by *Shekhinah*, "the *nobleman's daughter*."

The compound word וזאת (*ve-zot*), *and this*, alludes to the union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. See above, note 2. An honest transaction stimulates their embrace, which in turn validates the human agreement.

On *Shekhinah* as the *nobleman's daughter*, see above, note 14. The full verse in Ruth reads: *And this was formerly done in Israel in cases of redemption or exchange: to validate any matter, one man would remove his sandal and give it to the other. Such* [or: *And this*] *was the confirmation in Israel*.

22. **when they were humble and holy** See above, notes 11–12.

23. ***To validate* כל דבר (*kol davar*), *any matter*…** The word *kol* (all, any) alludes to *Yesod*, who conveys the entire flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*. One of Her many names is *davar* (word, matter), since She expresses divine speech. Thus the phrase *kol davar, any matter*, signifies the enduring union of *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*.

24. ***Ve-zot, And this, was the confirmation…*** The sefirotic significance of the compound word *ve-zot, and this*, indicates that the exchange of a shoe was not merely conventional. Rather, this human act stimulated divine union above. See above, notes 11–12.

25. **When the wicked increased…** Then, the deeply symbolic act of exchanging a shoe was replaced by the exchange of another item of clothing, such as a kerchief or the flap of a garment. However, even "כנפא (*kanpa*), the flap, of a garment" alludes to sublime mystery, as indicated by the verse in Deuteronomy, which reads in full: *A man shall not wed his father's wife, and he shall not uncover* כנף אביו (*kenaph aviv*), *his father's skirt*. The simple sense of this verse

pertains to the former wife of a person's father, not to his own mother. The idiom *uncover his father's skirt* is equivalent to "uncovering his father's nakedness," that is, "the nakedness of his father's wife, which is reserved for his father." Here, the idiom alludes to disrupting the union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, thereby exposing their nakedness. One who violates an agreement or transaction—which has been sealed with the flap of a garment—ruins the divine union. Cf. Vol. 7, p. 97, n. 295.

26. **זאת (*Zot*), *This, is the statute of the Torah…*** Having discussed the word וזאת (*ve-zot*), *and this* (in the book of Ruth), Rabbi El'azar turns to the verse in the portion of *Ḥuqqat* that begins with זאת (*zot*), *this*. See above at notes 8–10.

The "sign of the covenant" refers to the covenant of circumcision. The ritual act of circumcision includes two stages. First, the foreskin is cut and removed, disclosing the mucous membrane. Then, the membrane is torn down the middle and pulled back, revealing the corona. This second stage is called פריעה (*peri'ah*), "uncovering" the corona. The first stage corresponds to *Shekhinah*, who is called זאת (*zot*), "this (feminine)," while *peri'ah* corresponds to *Yesod* (the divine phallus), who is called זה (*zeh*), "this (masculine)." Once both stages have been completed, *Shekhinah* is included, as it were, in *Yesod*, and "all is called זה (*zeh*), this." Thus, from *Shekhinah* (the Female), one enters the masculine sefirotic realm, which begins (from below) with *Yesod*.

The reference to שמור (*shamor*), *keep* (Deuteronomy 5:12), and זכור (*zakhor*), *remember* (Exodus 20:8), derives from the two alternative versions of the Ten Commandments. The first version (in Exodus) reads: זכור (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to hallow it*. The second version (in Deuteronomy) reads: שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep, the Sabbath day to hallow it*. For the kabbalist, *zakhor, remember*, suggests זכר (*zakhar*), "male," signifying the male divine potency (centered in *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*), whereas the

alternative formulation, *shamor, keep*, signifies the female, *Shekhinah*.

On the two stages of circumcision, see above, pp. 67–68, n. 44. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7. On *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* as *zot* and *zeh* respectively, see *Zohar* 1:93b; 2:37b, 39b, 50b, 236b; 3:31a, 48b, 250a.

On *zakhor* and *shamor*, see BT *Berakhot* 20b; *Bahir* 124 (182); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 496–97; Naḥmanides on Exodus 20:8; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 420; *Zohar* 1:5b, 47b, 48b, 164b, 199b, 248a; 2:70b, 91a, 92a–b, 92a–b (*Piq*), 138a, 165b, 182b; 3:81b, 92b (*Piq*), 115b, 224a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 118; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110; Wolfson, introduction to *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 63–71.

27. חקת **(*Ḥuqqat*), *the statute of, the Torah*...** Rabbi El'azar wonders why Scripture doesn't employ the more common form (and cognate), חק (*ḥoq*), *the rule*. He indicates that *ḥuqqat* alludes to *Shekhinah*. She is symbolized by the feminine marker ה (*he*); though before attaining this full form, She was impoverished, as signified by the shape of the letter ד (*dalet*), which resembles just part of the letter ה (*he*) and suggests דלה (*dallah*), "poor."

The word חקת (*ḥuqqat*) is distinguished from חק (*ḥoq*) by its final letter, ת (*tav*). This letter, which often functions as a feminine marker, here signifies *Shekhinah*. The shape of ת (*tav*) combines "ד (*dalet*) and נ (*nun*), joined as one," and each of these "components" symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

On *ḥuqqat* (or *ḥuqqah*) as signifying *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 3:113a. On the transformation from *dalet* into *he*, see *Zohar* 1:51a, 60a–b; 2:104a, 123b, 178b (*SdTs*). On *dalet* and *dallah*, cf. BT *Shabbat* 104a.

On the shape of the letter ת (*tav*), see Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 2:614; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 36; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 65–66. On *nun* as symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:147a–b

(*Tos*); 2:91a, 139a, 215a, 235b; 3:66b, 155a, 285a–b; *ZḤ* 41c. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 2.

28. **Why is *nun* called so?...** Its name suggests the wording in Leviticus ולא תונו (*Ve-lo tonu*), *You shall not defraud, one another*. Although the face of *Shekhinah* may be beaming benevolently upon a person, She can turn destructive when provoked by wickedness. Such a radical switch of character is described here as fraud or cheating.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Such is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, "I have done no wrong."* This verse is often applied to Lilith, but occasionally to *Shekhinah* Herself. See *Zohar* 2:196b; 3:47a, 72a (Vol. 7, pp. 480–81, n. 395), 106a, 180b, 292a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 83. Cf. *Zohar* 1:148a–b (*ST*).

29. **ת (*Tav*)—all as one...** Combining in its shape the letters ד (*dalet*) and נ (*nun*), as mentioned above (at note 27).

The letters ד (*dalet*) and ר (*resh*) look nearly identical, and both suggest "poverty," alluding to the impoverished state of *Shekhinah*, before She is filled with the flow of emanation. *Dalet* suggests דלה (*dallah*), "poor"; and *resh* suggests ריש (*rish*), "poverty." The letters ה (*he*) and ד (*dalet*) refer similarly to the two states of *Shekhinah*. See above, note 27.

The phrase "Engraved Letters" probably refers to a book of that title. See above, p. 165, n. 38. For various interpretations of this and the following paragraphs, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

30. חקת **(*Ḥuqqat*), *statute*...** Signifying *Shekhinah*, the same "matter" intimated by the various letters discussed above.

31. ***Speak to the Children of Israel*...** The full verse reads: *This is the statute of the teaching* [or: *of the Torah*] *that YHVH has commanded, saying, "Speak to the Children of Israel, that they take you a perfect red cow that has no blemish and on which no yoke has been put."* The ashes of

the *perfect red cow* purify anyone who has been defiled by contacting a corpse. See above, note 2.

The *red cow* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who receives the flow of emanation from *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—situated on the left side. *Gevurah* is symbolized by the ox in Ezekiel's vision. In that vision, each of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne has four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox (or bull) on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. See Ezekiel 1:10. On the red cow symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 3:14a, 76b.

32. ***Red*—red as a rose...** Reflecting the influence of *Din* (Judgment).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: כשושנה (*Ke-shoshanah*), *Like a lily, among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens*. In midrashic literature, this verse is understood as being sung by God in praise of the earthly Assembly of Israel. Here in the *Zohar*, the singer is the blessed Holy One, who praises *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel); the *thorns* represent harsh forces of Judgment.

In Song of Songs, שושנה (*shoshanah*) probably means "lily" or "lotus," though sometimes in the Midrash and the *Zohar* it connotes "rose." See Vol. 6, p. 66, n. 33. On the verse in Song of Songs as being uttered by God in praise of Israel, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:2–7; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:2; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 80:1. For its use in the *Zohar*, see *Zohar* 1:1a, 137a; 2:189b; 3:37b, 233b. On *Shekhinah* as a rose (or lily), see also *Zohar* 3:74a, 107a, 233b, 286b–287a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

33. **תמימה (*Temimah*), *perfect*...** Rabbi El'azar associates *temimah* (*perfect*) with תם (*tam*), "innocent." As mentioned above (at note 31), *Shekhinah* receives emanation from *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—who is identified with an ox. Her description as *temimah* matches the image of שור תם (*shor tam*), "an innocent ox."

In rabbinic literature, *shor tam* (an innocent ox) is an ox that has not gored anyone on more than three occasions. The Mishnah distinguishes between this type of ox and מועד שור (*shor mu'ad*), "a forewarned ox," that is, an ox that has already gored three times and whose owner has been duly warned. The owner of *shor tam* is liable for only half of the resulting damage, whereas the owner of *shor mu'ad* must pay in full.

Shekhinah, pictured as *shor tam* (an innocent ox), is characterized by "lenient Judgment" and is called "lower *Gevurah*." Her source, "upper *Gevurah*," God's powerful left hand, is pictured as *shor mu'ad* (a forewarned ox) and is characterized by "harsh Judgment." On the two types of oxen, see above, pp. 68–70, nn. 45, 47–48.

34. ***And on which no* עול (*ol*), *yoke, has been put…*** In the Masoretic text, the word על (*ol*), *yoke*, is spelled without the letter ו (*vav*), which enables Rabbi El'azar to read it midrashically as עַל (*al*), "above" or "on high," as in the verse from Samuel. So now the verse alludes to a situation in which *Shekhinah* is not united with *Tif'eret*—He "above" and She "below"—but rather alongside Him. Thus She is still *Virgin Israel*, and *no man had known her*.

Rabbi El'azar may be construing the verse in Numbers as לא עלה עליה על (*lo alah aleha al*), *He* (namely *Tif'eret*) *has not mounted her above*. Cf. M *Parah* 2:4: "If a male [i.e., a bull] mounted her [namely the red cow], she is disqualified."

The quotation from 2 Samuel 20 reads: *I am* אמוני ישראל שלמי (*shelumei emunai yisra'el*), [*of*] *the peaceable faithful of Israel*. Here, Rabbi El'azar apparently construes the phrase as *consummation of the faithful of Israel*, alluding perhaps to the fact that *Shekhinah* completes the sefirotic realm, the focus of Israel's faith. Cf. *Zohar* 3:37a; *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The verse in 2 Samuel 23 reads: *Utterance of David son of Jesse, utterance of the man raised* על (*al*), *on high,*

anointed of the God of Jacob. King David often symbolizes *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom).

The verse in Amos reads: *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel*. The verse in Genesis (describing Rebekah) reads: *The young woman was very beautiful, a virgin—no man had known her*. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

35. ***You shall give it to Eleazar the priest…*** Who fulfills the role of prefect (or deputy high priest). It would not be fitting for Aaron the high priest to conduct the ritual of the red cow (which involves Judgment), because he symbolizes *Ḥesed* and serves as "the best man" of *Shekhinah*, conducting Her to unite with *Tif'eret*.

On the significance of the wording *to Eleazar the priest*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 123; *Sifrei Zuta*, Numbers 19:3; *Tosefta Parah* 4:6; BT *Yoma* 42b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* (ed. Buber), 41a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 27; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 19:3–4; Rashi and Naḥmanides on Numbers 19:3. Cf. M *Parah* 4:1; *Zohar* 2:237b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

On Aaron as "the best man" of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 172, n. 17. On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

36. **Aaron does not come from the side of 'pure'…** The term "holy" alludes to priests (and especially Aaron), whereas "pure" alludes to others, generally the Levites. Since the ritual of the red cow is intended to purify those who have become impure (by contacting a corpse), it is not assigned to Aaron. On the distinction between "pure" and "holy," see above, p. 172, n. 16.

37. **Every element of this cow is in seven…** See the description of this ritual in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:2, attributed to Rabbi Ḥanan son of Pazzi: "Seven cows, seven burnings, seven sprinklings, seven washings, seven impure, seven pure, seven priests."

Here Rabbi El'azar explains the recurrence of the number seven as alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is the seventh of the lower *sefirot* and who is associated with the Sabbatical year.

The name בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), "Bathsheba," means literally "Daughter of Seven." In the *Zohar* it often alludes to *Shekhinah*, the daughter of *Binah* (who is known as Seven, since She includes all seven lower *sefirot*). Alternatively, *Shekhinah* is called *Bat Sheva* because She receives the flow of all seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or because She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself.

For various attempts to identify the precise biblical referents of all the "sevens" in the passage in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* (seven cows, burnings, sprinklings, etc.) and for parallels to that passage, see Vol. 7, p. 517, n. 515.

38. **Everything produced from this cow...** The ashes of the red cow are to be mixed with water, which is then sprinkled upon anyone who has become defiled through contact with a human corpse, so as to purify him. Since "purity" does not relate specifically to the priests (who are characterized by "holiness" or "sanctity"), the priestly prefect does not himself slaughter or burn the cow, so that the elements of Judgment involved in this ritual will not "appear on his side" (the side of *Ḥesed*, associated with the priests). Aaron himself, who represents the essence of *Ḥesed*, is not involved in this ritual at all.

See above, note 36. On the prefect's not slaughtering or burning the red cow, see Numbers 19:3, 5; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 19:3, 5; *Sifrei*, Numbers 123–24; BT *Yoma* 42a–43b.

39. ***cedarwood, hyssop, and crimson stuff...*** The full verse reads: *The priest shall take cedarwood, hyssop, and crimson stuff and cast them into the burning of the cow*. On the sefirotic significance of these elements, see *Zohar* 3:53a–b.

40. ***A pure man shall gather…*** And not a priest, who is called *holy*.

On purity resulting only from a prior state of impurity, see *Zohar* 2:69b; 3:48b (Vol. 7, pp. 305–6, n. 160). Cf. BT *Yoma* 43b (and parallels); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

On the distinction between *holy* and *pure*, see above, note 36. On the significance of the wording *A pure man shall gather it*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 124; M *Parah* 4:4; *Tosefta Parah* 4:11; BT *Yoma* 43a. For the full verse in Numbers, see the following note.

41. ***for waters of*** **נדה** **(*niddah*), *defilement*…** The full verse reads: *A pure man shall gather the cow's ashes and set them outside the camp in a pure place, and it shall be for the community of the Children of Israel in safekeeping as waters of* נדה (*niddah*), *lustration; it is* חטאת (*ḥattat*), *a purification* [or: *expiation*] *offering*.

Rabbi El'azar is playing on the converse sense of *niddah*: "defilement, menstruation" and on another rendering of *ḥattat*: "sin offering." These terms allude here to the dangerous situation when (due to human sin) *Shekhinah* suckles from the demonic Other Side and turns bloody and threatening, stimulating numerous impure forces.

By "this act" of slaughtering and burning the red cow, Judgment is executed, these impure forces are weakened, and *Shekhinah* is purified. The negative forces flee, since their power "appears to them like this"—that is, eliminated, like what has happened to the cow. Consequently, anyone who has become impure by contact with a human corpse is purified by the *waters of niddah*.

See *Zohar* 2:237b; 3:54a (a passage that similarly links the menstruation of *Shekhinah* and *a sword, full of blood*). On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see also below, p. 389, n. 307; Koren, *Forsaken*, 73–97. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the demonic realm, see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 189–92; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:373–79; Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 249, 251–54.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom*. In the *Zohar*, this divine sword is often identified as *Shekhinah*.

42. **El'azar, you have made it impossible…** His presentation has been so profound that none of the other Companions will dare to say anything further. See above at note 10.

43. ***Letting loose springs in streams…*** On these verses, see *Zohar* 2:220a.

44. **When supernal Wisdom struck its engravings…** When *Ḥokhmah* stimulated the primordial sefirotic designs engraved within it, the river of *Binah* issued, including all Her fifty gates.

The image of *Binah*'s fifty gates derives from a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*), understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

The "one slender channel, unknown" is the secret passage between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, which elsewhere in the *Zohar* is called *a path unknown to any bird of prey* (Job 28:7). See *Zohar* 1:29b; 2:122b–123a; 3:61b, 193b.

The "springs and streams" are the lower *sefirot* flowing from *Binah*, which are also called here "supernal rivers of pure balsam." *Binah* Herself is "the supernal holy stream."

According to a rabbinic tradition, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 12, p. 238; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Zohar* 1:4b, 7a, 88a (*ST*), 176a; 2:27b, 127a–b, 146b, 177a (*SdTs*); 3:131a (*IR*), 144b (*IR*), 259a, 289a–b (*IZ*). Cf. *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:15a (*MhN*), 83a–b, 87b, 175b; 3:67a, 91a,

267b. In the *Zohar*, *Binah* is known as the World that is Coming; see above, p. 144, n. 279.

The term "reservoir" renders the Zoharic neologism קוזפא (*quzpa*), perhaps based on כוספא (*kuspa*), "residue," which the medieval dictionary *Arukh* defines as "vessel." See *Zohar* 2:175b (Vol. 5, p. 527, n. 963); *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Scholem. Cf. *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189, s.v. *qazpita*.

45. ***They water all beasts of* שדי (*sadai*), *the field*...** These *beasts* are the four angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings, beasts) carrying the Divine Throne, which are identified here with the *four riverheads* described in the verse from Genesis: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. This *river* is *Binah*, issuing from *Ḥokhmah* (described as *Eden*) and watering *Shekhinah* (the *garden*). So the four *ḥayyot* (or *riverheads*) emerge from the *garden* of *Shekhinah*, along with camps of angels.

Rabbi Shim'on plays with שָׂדַי (*sadai*), *the field*, and the Divine Name שַׁדַּי (*Shaddai*), which here designates the chief angel, מטטרון (*Metatron*), whose name is numerically equivalent to שדי (*Shaddai*). Thus the *ḥayyot* are *beasts of the field*—that is, of Metatron, their leader. His name, *Shaddai*, is borrowed from *Yesod*, or *Yesoda* (Foundation). This accords with the Talmudic tradition (BT *Sanhedrin* 38b) about Metatron, "whose name is like the name of his Master."

On *Shaddai* as referring to *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 247a; 3:11b, 177a. On *Shaddai* as referring to Metatron, see *Zohar* 1:149a (*ST*).

46. ***Wild asses slake their thirst*...** Rabbi Shim'on identifies these with a class of angels below the *ḥayyot*, known as *ofanim* (*wheels*). The context in Ezekiel (1:19–21) reads: *When* החיות (*ha-ḥayyot*), *the living beings* [or: *the beasts*], *moved*, האופנים (*ha-ofanim*), *the wheels, moved beside them; and when the living beings rose off the ground, the wheels rose too. Wherever the spirit would go they went—*

wherever the spirit would go—and the wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels. When these moved, those moved; and when these halted, those halted; and when these rose off the ground, the wheels rose alongside them—for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels.

In verses 20–21, the noun חיה (*ḥayyah*), *living being*, appears in the singular, apparently to emphasize the unity of the ensemble of four living beings. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 48. Here, Rabbi Shim'on apparently identifies *the living being* with Metatron, or perhaps with *Shekhinah*. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:436. Cf. *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

47. **When these are saturated…** Once the *ḥayyot* and *ofanim* are nourished, all the other angelic forces below (pictured as *birds of heaven*) receive the sustaining flow. The verse from Psalms follows directly after the verses quoted above at note 43.

48. ***From the fruit of Your works…*** Finally, *earth* below is nourished by the flow, which issues from *Binah*, "the stream, deepest of all." The full verse reads: *Watering mountains from His lofts, from the fruit of Your works earth is sated*.

49. **But when the world dwells in Judgment…** When human wickedness stimulates harsh Judgment, blessings disappear and *Shekhinah* Herself (symbolized by the Sanctuary) is defiled. Then demonic forces threaten people, and the impure spirit defiles them.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *You hide Your face, and they panic*. תסף (*tosef*), *You withdraw, their breath* [or: *their spirit*], *and they perish, and to their dust they return*. The simple sense of the verb *tosef* is *You withdraw*, based on the root אסף (*'sf*), "gather, gather in, withdraw"; but here Rabbi Shim'on understands it as *You increase*, based on the root יסף (*ysf*). Now the verse implies that when *You hide Your face*, the angels (and/or human beings) *panic*, because the

angels are deprived of their sustenance and can no longer convey blessing to the worlds. Then, *You increase their spirit*—meaning that another, impure spirit comes and settles upon human beings, defiling them.

On *tosef* as *You increase*, cf. Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 59; *Zohar* 1:218b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 206, 392–93.

50. **What is their remedy?...** How can people be purified from their defilement? The answer is provided by the conclusion of the verse in Psalms: *and to their dust they return*. According to its simple sense, of course, this clause refers to being buried in the earth; but here it alludes to *Shekhinah*—who is known as *dust*—from whom all life originates and to whom all returns, as implied by the verse in Ecclesiastes: *All comes from the dust, and all returns to the dust*.

The clause in Psalms also refers specifically to the ritual of the red cow and the *dust* (or *ashes*) *of the burnt purification offering* (of that cow). As mentioned above (note 31), the red cow symbolizes *Shekhinah*. People can be cleansed of their defilement if they *return* in *teshuvah* to *Shekhinah* (*their dust*)—or in earlier times, if they were purified by the *dust of the burnt* cow, mixed with water.

According to a midrashic tradition (in the name of Rabbi Naḥman), “even the globe of the sun” was created from the earth. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* and *Qohelet Zuta* on 3:20; *Zohar* 1:170a; 3:34b, 125a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344. Cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 13:1.

On *Shekhinah* as dust, see *Zohar* 1:49a, 170a, 249b–250a; 2:23b–24b; 3:34b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344–45; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 171; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 57–58, 62 (70–71, 77–78).

The full verse in Numbers reads: *They shall take for the impure person* מעפר (*me-afar*), *some of the dust* [or: *ashes*] *of, the burnt purification offering and living* [or: *fresh, running,*

spring] *water shall be put into it* [or: *put upon it; poured upon it*] *in a vessel*. Whereas this verse employs the term עפר (*afar*), the related term אפר (*efer*), *ashes*, appears twice earlier in the same passage (Numbers 19:9–10). The two terms are conjoined in Genesis 18:27 and Job 42:6: עפר ואפר (*afar va-efer*), *dust and ashes*. According to Levine (*Numbers*, 468), in the verse about the ritual of the red cow *afar* "describes the dusty physical character of the cow's ashes."

51. **After they return to this dust…** After returning in *teshuvah* to *Shekhinah*.

Rabbi Shim'on associates the verb יבראון (*yibbare'un*), *they are created*, with the root ברא (*br'*), "to be healthy." The verse in Psalms begins: *You send forth Your breath* [or: *Your spirit*].

52. **the Woman is purified…** *Shekhinah*—who had been tainted by demonic energy, due to human sin—is now purified to reunite with *Tif'eret*, Her Husband. She is symbolized by *the earth* as well as the moon.

53. ***I will sprinkle pure water…*** The full verse reads: *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure; from all your impurities and from all your idols will I purify you*.

54. ***The Children of Israel…*** The context in Numbers (20:1–2) reads: *The Children of Israel, the whole community, came to the Desert of Zin, in the first month* [or: *on the first new moon*], *and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there, and was buried there. And the community had no water, and they assembled against Moses and against Aaron*. On this *Zohar* passage (extending below to p. 217 at n. 93), see Abrams, "The Virgin Mary as the Moon that Lacks the Sun."

55. **Why is the Section of the Cow adjacent…** Numbers, Chapter 19, describing the ritual of the red cow, is immediately followed by the account of the death of Miriam. According to Rabbi Yehudah, both of these passages concern the enactment of Judgment: first upon

the cow, which is slaughtered in order to purify the impure; and then upon Miriam. When she departed from the world, the well that miraculously accompanied the Israelites through the desert also disappeared. Both Miriam and the well symbolize *Shekhinah*, the Divine Well, filled with the flow of emanation.

See JT *Yoma* 1:1, 38b, in the name of Rabbi Ba bar Binah (or, Abba bar Avina): "Why did Scripture place the death of Miriam adjacent to the Section of the Cow? To teach you that just as the ashes of the cow atone for Israel, so the death of the righteous atones for Israel."

On this Talmudic passage, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:12; BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:11; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 10; Rashi on Numbers 20:1.

On Miriam's well, see Vol. 5, pp. 134–35, n. 380. On the link between Miriam's death and the disappearance of the well, see *Tosefta Sotah* 11:1, 8; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 9; *Targum Yonatan*, Numbers 20:2; BT *Ta'anit* 9a; *Tanḥuma, Bemidbar* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bemidbar* 2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 1:2; Rashi on Numbers 20:2; *Zohar* 1:124b; 3:102b–103a. On the red cow, see above, note 2.

56. ***And you, O son of man…*** This verse does not appear anywhere in the Bible, though it reflects elements of Ezekiel 19:1 (*And you, raise a lament for the princes of Israel*); ibid. 28:12 (*O son of man, raise a lament over the king of Tyre*); ibid. 32:2 (*O son of man, raise a lament over Pharaoh king of Egypt*); and Amos 5:1–2: *Hear this word that I intone as a lament over you, O House of Israel. Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel; abandoned on her soil, with no one to raise her up*. The same supposed verse is quoted in *Zohar* 3:6a. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

Here the title *Virgin Israel* refers to *Shekhinah*, and Rabbi Abba asks why the prophet is told to lament over Her alone.

After all, in the time of exile other *sefirot* are impaired as well. He explains that all such impairment results from the damage suffered by *Shekhinah*, who languishes in exile. Because of Her, *Ḥesed* (the divine right arm) is broken and unable to embrace Her. Whereas previously sparkling streams of emanation had poured upon *Tif'eret* (the trunk of the divine body, symbolized by *the heavens* and the sun), now this shining flow from the higher *sefirot* is interrupted and darkness prevails, because *Tif'eret*'s partner, *Shekhinah*—the intended recipient of the flow—has disappeared.

The simple sense of the verse in Psalms is הושיעה ימינך (*Hosh'ia yeminekha*), *Save* [*with*] *Your right hand, and answer me!* But here, Rabbi Abba reads this hyperliterally: *Save Your right hand!*—as if the Psalmist (or *Shekhinah*) is pleading with God, "Restore Your impaired limb so that You can *answer me*!"

The verse in Isaiah actually reads: *I clothe the heavens in blackness, and make sackcloth their covering*. The same rewording as here appears in *Zohar* 3:74b–75a; *ZḤ* 37d; *TZ* 21, 50a. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the Virgin Mary, see Vol. 7, p. 21, n. 61.

57. ***Miriam died there…*** Miriam symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the Divine Well; so when she died, the well accompanying the Israelites through the desert disappeared. Aaron symbolizes *Ḥesed*, the sefirotic right arm; so when he died, that divine limb was broken. Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret*, the trunk of the divine body (pictured as the sun); so when he died, "the sun was darkened."

See above, note 55. The full verse in Numbers 20 reads: *Let Aaron be gathered to his kin, for he shall not come into the land that I have given to the Children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the Waters of Meribah*. On this rebellion, see Numbers 20:2–13.

The full verse in Deuteronomy (spoken by God to Moses) reads: *Die on the mountain where you are going up and be gathered to your kin, as Aaron your brother died on*

Hor the mountain and was gathered to his kin. The verse in Numbers 27 reads: *You shall be gathered to your kin—you, too, as Aaron your brother was gathered*.

58. **There was never a generation…** On the unique benefits provided to the Generation of the Desert through the merit of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, see BT *Ta'anit* 9a, in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah: "Three fine leaders arose for Israel, namely Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; and through them were given three fine presents, namely the well [that miraculously accompanied Israel through the desert], the cloud [of glory shielding them], and manna. The well, by the merit of Miriam; the pillar of cloud, by the merit of Aaron; manna, by the merit of Moses."

The reign of Solomon is pictured as a time of peace and prosperity. However, Rabbi Abba explains that in those days *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) ruled, while *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun) had (partially) withdrawn; whereas in the time of Moses *Tif'eret* ruled, while *Shekhinah* was secondary.

On the great status of the Generation of the Desert, see above, p. 55, n. 4. On the passage in *Ta'anit*, see Vol. 8, pp. 157–58, n. 294.

59. **Miriam is the moon…** She symbolizes *Shekhinah* (pictured as the moon). Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret* (pictured as the sun). Aaron symbolizes *Ḥesed* (the divine right arm); Hur here symbolizes *Gevurah* (the divine left arm).

On the interaction between Moses, Aaron, and Hur, see Exodus 17:11–12 (describing the scene during the battle between Israel and Amalek): *When Moses would raise his hand, Israel prevailed; when he would let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Moses' hands grew heavy, so they took a stone and placed it beneath him and he sat upon it, while Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one from this side and one from that side, and his hands were steadfast till the sun came down*. See *Zohar* 2:66a, 223b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 57.

Nahshon son of Amminadab from the tribe of Judah is famous for his role at the Red Sea. According to rabbinic tradition, no one wanted to be the first to enter and cross, until finally Nahshon jumped in. See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 5; BT *Sotah* 37a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 42; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:7. On Nahshon as symbolizing the divine left arm, see *Zohar* 3:156a, 260a; *ZḤ* 42b.

60. **First, the moon departed…** First came the death of Miriam (symbolizing *Shekhinah*, the moon), and the well disappeared. Then followed the death of Aaron—symbolizing *Ḥesed*, the right arm that embraces *Shekhinah* and draws Her to *Tif'eret* (the trunk of the divine body). Finally came the death of Moses, symbolizing *Tif'eret* (who is pictured as the sun).

See above, notes 55, 57. The context in Exodus (15:20–21) reads: *Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang out to them: "Sing to YHVH, for He has risen up triumphantly; horse and its rider He hurled into the sea!"* On the verse in Numbers (quoted here as *Be gathered to your kin*), see above at the end of note 57.

61. **In the days of Solomon…** Then *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) ruled in all Her glory. But as Solomon sinned, *Shekhinah* became defective, waning like the moon; and consequently, only one of the tribes of Israel (Judah) remained loyal to Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

According to the Midrash, just as the moon does not become full until the fifteenth day of its cycle, so it remained incomplete until the glorious reign of Solomon in the fifteenth generation from Abraham. See *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full."

According to Deuteronomy 17:16–17, a king is commanded as follows: *Only let him not get himself many horses, that he not turn the people back to Egypt in order*

to get many horses… And let him not get himself many wives, that his heart not swerve, and let him not get himself too much silver and gold. Solomon violated all of these strictures and was enticed by his wives to worship false gods; consequently God punished him by declaring that his son Rehoboam would rule over only one of the tribes. See 1 Kings 5:6; 10:14–17; 11:1–13, 29–39.

On the direction associated with *Shekhinah*, see BT *Bava Batra* 25b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "*Shekhinah* is in the west." On *Shekhinah* as never moving from the Western Wall of the Temple, see Vol. 8, pp. 272–73, n. 75. Cf. Rashi on BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 20b, s.v. *nolad*; 24a, s.v. *kan*.

On the passage in *Shemot Rabbah*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:12; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 77a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bo* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:14; Vol. 8, p. 236, n. 38.

62. ***The sun rises…*** On the night when Israel came out of Egypt, the sun miraculously shone (symbolizing *Tif'eret*, who corresponds to Moses), not the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).

On the sun's shining during the night of the Exodus, see *Zohar* 2:38a. Cf. *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), pp. 43–44 and nn. 18, 1.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *The sun rises* [or: *shines*] *and the sun sets, and to its place it strives* [or: *pants, glides*]*; there it rises* [or: *it shines*]. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 58:2; BT *Qiddushin* 72b; *Zohar* 1:136a, 146b, 146b (*ST*); 3:53a.

63. ***And to its place it strives…*** According to its simple sense, the verse indicates that after setting, the sun returns to its point of departure, where it rose the previous morning. Rabbi Abba explains the clause *and the sun sets* as alluding to Moses (who symbolizes *Tif'eret*, pictured as *the sun*): he died (or "set") along with the other Israelites who perished in the desert. Yet, even when *Tif'eret* *sets*, He continues to illumine *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon).

Similarly, when Moses died, his soul endured in order to illumine Her.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH said to Moses, "Here, you are about to lie with your fathers,* העם הזה וקם (*ve-qam ha-am ha-zeh*), *and this people will rise, and go whoring after the alien gods of the land into the midst of which they are coming, and they will forsake Me and violate My covenant that I have made with them*." According to a rabbinic tradition, it is possible to read the beginning of God's declaration as: *Here, you are about to lie with your fathers ve-qam, and rise*—alluding to the eventual resurrection of Moses. Here, Rabbi Abba applies this midrashic reading to Moses' enduring spiritual existence and potency.

See *Or Yaqar*. On the ambiguous reading of *ve-qam, and rise*, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Beshallaḥ)* 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 17:9; *Baraita di-Mlekhet ha-Mishkan* 10; JT *Avodah Zarah* 2:5, 41c–d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 80:6; BT *Yoma* 52a–b, *Sanhedrin* 90b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 44; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; *Tanḥuma, Beshallaḥ* 26.

64. ***What profit is there…*** Joshua succeeded Moses and was thus *under the sun*—taking the place of Moses (who symbolizes *the sun*). But in another sense, too, he was *under the sun*, since he was associated with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon), who is *under Tif'eret* (symbolized by *the sun*). Not having attained the full brilliance of *Tif'eret* (*the sun*), he could not fully illumine *Shekhinah* (the moon).

65. **Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!…** This wording derives from a Talmudic passage comparing Moses and Joshua. When Moses was about to die, God told him to take Joshua and instructed him as follows: *You shall set some of your splendor upon him, so that the whole Israelite community will heed* (Numbers 27:20). The Talmud (*Bava Batra* 75a) notes: "*You shall set some of your splendor upon him*—and not *all your splendor*. The elders of that generation said: 'The face of

Moses was like that of the sun; the face of Joshua was like that of the moon. Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!'"

Rabbi Abba indicates that Joshua did not succeed in attaining the rung of *Tif'eret* (*the sun*) like Moses, but only the rung of *Shekhinah* (the moon)—who has no light of Her own, only what She receives from *Tif'eret*. Joshua could illumine *Shekhinah* only indirectly, by "the light shining upon him" from Moses (representing *Tif'eret*). He failed to fulfill either *Tif'eret* (by attaining that rung) or *Shekhinah* (by illumining Her completely). On the passage in *Bava Batra*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 140; *Zohar* 3:283b.

66. **Wherever Solomon said *under the sun*...** King Solomon attained the rung of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the moon and thus situated *under the sun* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*). He referred to this numerous times in his book Ecclesiastes.

67. **one who takes deadly poison alone...** Rabbi Shim'on interprets the verse somewhat differently. The phrase *under the sun* still alludes to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon), who is *under Tif'eret* (symbolized by *the sun*). But now one who *toils under the sun* refers to one who grasps *Shekhinah* on Her own, separating Her from *Tif'eret* and thus ruining the divine union.

This was "the original sin" committed by Adam, who ate from the Tree of Knowledge (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) and separated Her from the Tree of Life (symbolizing *Tif'eret*). Whereas the simple sense of the verse's beginning is *What profit is there* לאדם (*la-adam*), *for a person*, Rabbi Shim'on reads it as *What profit is there la-adam, for Adam*. Adam's descendants continued to sin "in this place," that is, in the realm of *Shekhinah*, splitting Her away from *Tif'eret*, rather than uniting the divine couple.

The phrase "deadly poison" refers to the fatal aspect of *Shekhinah*, who is called not only the Tree of Knowledge but sometimes the Tree of Death, because when Adam and Eve

ate of the fruit of this Tree, death ensued. When *Shekhinah* is separated from the other *sefirot*, She becomes vulnerable to demonic forces and can transmit death and destruction. *Tif'eret*, the Tree of Life, represents "an elixir of life," which counteracts the poison. See above, note 6.

The phrase "the original sin" renders חובא קדמאה (*ḥova qadma'ah*), "the original (or primordial) sin." See Vol. 1, p. lxviii. On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, p. 8, n. 17. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

68. ***Moving toward the south…*** *The south* symbolizes *Ḥesed*, the divine right hand (or arm). *The north* symbolizes *Gevurah*, the divine left, pictured as fire.

The verse in Deuteronomy (linking Torah with God's right) reads in full: *YHVH from Sinai came and He shone from Seir upon them; He radiated from Mount Paran and He arrived from myriads of holy ones; from His right hand, a fiery law for them*. In the *Zohar*, the phrase *a fiery law* alludes to *Gevurah* on the left; so the verse combines right and left. On this verse (and on left as being included in right), see above, p. 168, n. 4.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *Moving toward the south, circling toward the north, round and round goes the wind, and on its rounds the wind returns*. See *Zohar* 1:136a, 147a.

69. **This verse is difficult…** The context (Ecclesiastes 1:5–6) reads: *The sun rises and the sun sets, and to its place it strives, where it rises. Moving toward the south, circling toward the north, round and round goes the wind, and on its rounds the wind returns*. The subject of *Moving toward the south, circling toward the north* is actually *the wind*, although many readers (both traditional and modern) have assumed that it is *the sun*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on adopts this latter view, and therefore wonders why the continuation of the verse specifies *the wind* rather than *the sun*.

He explains that here הרוח (*ha-ruaḥ*), *the wind*, refers to *Shekhinah*, who is identified as רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), the Holy Spirit. The reason that the subject of the verse (supposedly) switches from *the sun* to *the wind* is that this *wind* (*Shekhinah*) is closely related to *the sun* (*Tif'eret*), being *under the sun*. The description *round and round goes the wind* now means that *Shekhinah* goes to both *Ḥesed* on the right and *Gevurah* on the left in order to unite with *Tif'eret*, the trunk of the divine body.

The definite article *ha-* (*the*) specifies "that well-known" *ruaḥ* (*wind*, spirit), namely *Shekhinah*. Less well known (or revealed) is *Tif'eret*, who (compared with *Shekhinah*) is relatively "unidentified." If so, why does the same definite article appear in השמש (*ha-shemesh*), *the sun*, which alludes to *Tif'eret*? Because the link of Israel to *Tif'eret*—whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel)—is well known.

The wording ההוא דאשתמודעא (*ha-hu de-ishtemode'a*), "that well-known one," plays on the grammatical name for the definite article: ה׳ הידיעה (*he ha-yedi'ah*), literally "the *he* [that signifies] knowing (i.e., being well known, recognized, identified)."

On the subject of *Moving toward the south, circling toward the north*, see Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes 1:6; Gordis, *Koheleth*, 206; Fox, *Ecclesiastes*, 5. For various interpretations of the concluding sentence, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

70. **The patriarchs, who are the holy Chariot...** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob constitute the Divine Chariot-Throne.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6 (in the name of Resh Lakish): "The patriarchs themselves constitute the Chariot." In Kabbalah this statement implies that the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized respectively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) constitute a throne for the highest level of Divinity. The fourth component (or leg) of

the Chariot is *Shekhinah*, who is identified with "this *ruaḥ*," namely רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), the Holy Spirit.

Shekhinah—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—is intimately associated with, and symbolized by, King David. In rabbinic sources, the verse in Psalms alludes to David, youngest of Jesse's sons, who was *rejected* by his brothers and relegated to tending the flock, yet eventually founded the Davidic dynasty. In the *Zohar*, the "rejection" of *a stone* alludes to the diminishment of the light of *Shekhinah*. At times, due to human misconduct, She receives less illumination from the *sefirot* above Her (*the builders*). The image of *the cornerstone* represents *Shekhinah*'s vital role in the sefirotic structure and process. See 1 Samuel 16:11; BT *Pesaḥim* 119a; *Midrash Shemu'el* 19:7; *Yalqut ha-Makhiri*, Psalms 118:22, par. 28; *Bahir* 61 (91), 131 (190); *Zohar* 1:20a–b, 72a, 89b (*ST*), 197b, 231a, 246b; 2:232b; 3:142b (*IR*), 152b.

On the patriarchs' constituting the Throne, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 57; *Zohar* 1:60b, 99a, 150a, 154b, 173b, 186a, 222b, 223b–224a, 226b, 248b; 2:23b, 31b, 144a; 3:17b, 38a, 71b, 87b, 99a, 142b (*IR*), 145a (*IR*), 146a, 151a, 262b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 239–40; Chaze, "De l'identification des patriarches au char divin." On David's role along with the patriarchs, see Vol. 8, p. 436, n. 409.

71. **all the words of King Solomon are sealed in wisdom…** Although some of the biblical verses attributed to Solomon seem mundane or not profound, they all convey deep wisdom. See above, pp. 11–12, n. 28; p. 181, n. 45.

The formulation "they see his words like those of someone else" could conceivably allude to the pseudepigraphic style of the *Zohar*, which attributes its teachings to Rabbi Shim'on and his Companions.

72. ***Wisdom is good with an inheritance…*** The context in Ecclesiastes (7:11–12) reads: *Wisdom is good with an inheritance—an advantage to those who see the*

sun. For in wisdom's shade [or: *shelter*] *is money's shade, and the advantage of knowing wisdom* [or: *of wisdom's knowledge*] *keeps its possessors alive*. The point in Ecclesiastes is that wisdom is valuable, but especially if one has material inheritance to back it up. The security provided by wisdom helps one attain (and manage) the security provided by wealth.

Rabbi Shim'on conveys a deeper meaning that has been revealed to him, without which "I would not know what he was saying." This remark apparently means that the literal meaning of the verse is obscure, or too pedestrian or obvious for King Solomon to have intended. The deeper sense of the verse is that *wisdom* alludes to *Shekhinah* (known as Lower Wisdom or Wisdom of Solomon), who is *under the sun*, that is, beneath *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *the sun*). See above, notes 64, 66–67, 69.

73. **fine and beautiful with Israel…** *Shekhinah* is beautiful along with Her people, Israel.

74. ***for those who see the sun…*** Namely, those who ascend from *Shekhinah* and *see* (that is, perceive or attain) the rung of *Tif'eret*—symbolized by *the sun* and identified with the Tree of Life.

The full verse reads: *Wisdom is good with an inheritance*—ויתר לראי שמש (*ve-yoter le-ro'ei shemesh*), *an advantage to those who see the sun* [understood here as: *and even better for those who see the sun*].

75. ***The advantage of knowledge…*** For Rabbi Shim'on, the term דעת (*da'at*), *knowledge*, refers to the hidden *sefirah* of *Da'at*, which is here associated with *Tif'eret*, the Tree of Life. Its *advantage* is *wisdom*, because Torah (identified with *Tif'eret* and the Tree of Life) issues from *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom).

On the relation between Torah and Wisdom, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:5, in the name of Rabbi Avin: "Torah is an unripe fruit of supernal Wisdom." See *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:17; *Zohar* 1:47b; 2:62a, 85a, 121a; 3:81a, 192b; *ZḤ* 15b

(*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 106–8, 326–30; Matt, *God and the Big Bang*, 103–15.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *The advantage of knowing wisdom* [or: *of wisdom's knowledge*] *keeps its possessors alive*. This is understood here as: *The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom keeps its possessors alive*.

76. **Furthermore, *Wisdom is good with inheritance…*** *Shekhinah* (known as Lower Wisdom or Wisdom of Solomon) is *good* with *Yesod* (called Righteous One of the World). *Yesod*'s designation *inheritance* apparently implies that He bestows the riches of emanation upon *Shekhinah*. Similarly, He conveys the light of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun). The two rungs of *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* ideally dwell as one. It is *even better* if a person can stimulate the union of *Shekhinah* directly with *Tif'eret* (*the sun*).

77. **This is *Da'at*, the Tree of Life…** Namely, *Tif'eret*. (See above, note 75.) The verse in Proverbs now implies that *without* *Tif'eret* (identified with *da'at, knowledge*), *Shekhinah* (who is called *soul* and "soul of King David") *is not good*.

On *Shekhinah* as *wisdom*, see the preceding note. On "the soul of (King) David," see 1 Samuel 18:1; 2 Samuel 5:8; *Zohar* 1:101a, 206a, 240a; 2:27a, 171a; 3:45b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 348; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 43; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 61 (75).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Surely, without knowledge a soul is not good, and he who hurries with his feet sins*. See *Zohar* 2:24b; 3:49b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 347–48.

78. **for there the Tree is rooted…** The Tree of Life (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) is rooted in *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), and it flourishes in all directions, nourishing all above and below—including those on earth who devote themselves to Torah, grasping the Tree.

79. **that rung of his…** *Shekhinah*, who is situated *under the sun*—that is, beneath *Tif'eret*. See above, note 66.

80. ***Let Aaron be gathered to his kin…*** The full verse reads: *Let Aaron be gathered to his kin, for he shall not come into the land that I have given to the Children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the Waters of Meribah*. On this rebellion, see Numbers 20:2–13.

81. ***I praise the dead, who have already died…*** The context in Ecclesiastes (4:2–3) reads: *I praise the dead, who have already died, more than the living, who are still alive. And better than both is one who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun*. See *Zohar* 1:187b, 188b; 2:75a, 105b; 3:70b–71a, 308b (*Tosefet*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 144–45.

82. **Now, is King Solomon praising the dead…** After all, the term "dead" describes the wicked, whereas "living" describes the righteous.

See BT *Berakhot* 18a–b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya: "The righteous… even in their death are called 'living,' as is said: *Benaiah son of Jehoiada, son of a living man*…. Do you mean to say that all other people are sons of dead men? Rather, *son of a living man*, for even in his death he was called *living*…. The wicked… even in their life are called 'dead.'"

Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a loyal follower of King David who attains mythic status in the *Zohar*. See *Zohar* 1:6a, 132a, 136a, 164a, 207b; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Tsedeq*, 7a.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 17:6; JT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4d; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:5; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 131; *Tanḥuma, Vezot Haberakhah* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vezot Haberakhah* 7. The full verse in Samuel reads: *Benaiah son of Jehoiada, son of a valiant man* [or, according to the *ketiv*: *a living man*], *great in deeds, from Kabzeel—he struck down the two* [*sons of*] *Ariel of Moab, and he went down and killed the lion in the pit on the day of the snow*.

83. **all the words of King Solomon were spoken in wisdom…** If this verse read simply *I praise the dead more than the living*, then "I would agree" that its meaning is troubling. But the qualification *who have already died* alludes to a deep secret of wisdom, namely the doctrine of reincarnation.

When a person has died, in certain cases God enables that soul to return in a new body in order to fulfill (or "mend") itself on earth in a second lifetime. When such a person dies a second time, "he is more praiseworthy than others who die," that is, *than the living* who are yet to experience death, since one who has died twice has thereby been punished twice for whatever sins he committed in his first lifetime.

The phrase "rectified in the dust" may refer to punishment in the grave, known as *ḥibbut ha-qever* (beating in the grave). See above, p. 122, n. 207. Alternatively, it refers to the fashioning of a new body, metaphorically composed of the dust of the earth. See above, note 16.

On the wisdom of King Solomon's words, see above, note 71. On reincarnation, see above, pp. 98–99, n. 140. On the verse in Ecclesiastes as alluding to reincarnation, see *Zohar* 1:187b, 188b; 2:75a, 105b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 144–45. The verse in Nahum reads: צרה (*Tsarah*), *An enemy, does not arise twice*. Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes *tsarah* as *distress*.

84. ***who have already died,* precisely!…** In a previous lifetime. They are now *living* again, yet they are called *dead* because they have already tasted death. Furthermore, in their second lifetime they have the opportunity and responsibility to mend the misdeeds of their previous incarnation, "so they are called *dead*," alluding to their previous lives that ended.

85. **if they are worthy of that world…** That is, of the world of bliss in the afterlife.

86. **bound in the Bundle of Life…** After death, the souls of the righteous are bound in *Shekhinah*, who is often called Bundle of Life. From there, they gaze upon *Binah, the beauty of YHVH*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze* בנעם יהוה (*be-no'am YHVH*), *upon the beauty* [or: *delightfulness, loveliness*] *of YHVH*, ולבקר (*ul-vaqqer*), *and to reflect* [or: *search, seek, inquire, contemplate*], *in His temple* [or: *in His palace*]. In the *Zohar, no'am* designates *Binah*. See above, p. 51, n. 143.

On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*]." On the phrase Bundle of Life, see above, p. 15, n. 39.

87. **Those who are not as worthy…** After death, such souls are stationed in the terrestrial Garden of Eden.

88. **What is Lower Eden?…** This is actually identical with *Shekhinah*, who is called Lower Wisdom. She presides over the terrestrial Garden (of Eden). The phrase "no further" means no higher *sefirah* watches over this Garden. The souls in this Garden bask in the light issuing from *Shekhinah* ("this Eden") above.

On the distinction between Eden and the Garden, see Genesis 2:8, 10; BT *Berakhot* 34b; *Zohar* 2:210b.

89. **Lower Eden and Higher Eden…** Whereas Lower Eden designates *Shekhinah*, Higher Eden designates *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). The feminine quality of *Shekhinah* matches the feminine form עדנה (*ednah*), "delight"; while the masculine quality of *Ḥokhmah* matches the masculine form עדן (*eden*), which bears the same meaning.

For the term *ednah*, see Genesis 18:12 (recording Sarah's reaction to the divine prediction that she will bear a son at age ninety): *Sarah laughed inwardly, saying, "After*

being withered, am I to have עדנה (*ednah*), *delight, with my husband so old* [literally: *and my lord is old*]*?"* On *ednah* and *eden*, see *Zohar* 1:187b; above, p. 125, n. 217.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I saw* שיש יתרון לחכמה (*she-yesh yitron la-ḥokhmah*), *that wisdom has an advantage, over folly like the advantage of light over darkness* [or: *as light has an advantage over darkness*].

90. **This Lower Eden is called Garden…** In relation to *Ḥokhmah* (Higher Eden), *Shekhinah* (Lower Eden) is called by the less exalted name Garden. But in relation to the terrestrial Garden, She is called by the exalted name Eden. See *Zohar* 2:210b.

On holy days, souls inhabiting the terrestrial Garden bask in the light issuing from *Shekhinah* ("this Eden") above. See above, note 88. On the verse in Isaiah, see above, p. 31, n. 79.

91. ***more than the living, who are* עדנה *(adenah), still, alive…*** The souls of those who have not experienced death and reincarnation eventually attain the Lower Garden of Eden, which is associated with *Shekhinah*. As mentioned above (at note 89), She is called by the feminine term עדנה (*ednah*), "Delight," a homograph of the word in this verse: עדנה (*adenah*), *still*. Those other souls—*who have already died* and been reincarnated—attain the Higher Garden of Eden, having twice endured the purging punishment of death.

See above, note 83. On *adenah* and *ednah*, see *Zohar* 1:187b. The phrase *refined silver* appears in 1 Chronicles 29:4. Cf. Psalms 12:7.

92. ***And better than both…*** A soul that has not yet descended to earth lingers in the Higher Garden of Eden in a state of innocent bliss.

The full verse reads: *And better than both is one who has not* עדן (*aden*), *yet, been, who has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun*. Rabbi Ḥiyya is probably playing on *aden*, *yet*, and עדן (*eden*), Eden.

93. **Better than all of them…** Namely, one who is not even mentioned in the verse from Ecclesiastes, and who correspondingly does not reveal himself, but rather lives virtuously without flaunting his goodness. Such a person will not need to be reincarnated in order to fulfill himself. Furthermore, the perfection that his soul attains here on earth surpasses the state of bliss that a soul enjoys before birth.

The image of being "scorched by his canopy" derives from a Talmudic passage. See BT *Bava Batra* 75a: "Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, '… The blessed Holy One will fashion a canopy for each and every [righteous] person befitting his honor.' … Rabbi Ḥanina said, '… Each one will be scorched by the canopy of his fellow. Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!'"

According to some commentators, this "scorching" implies envy. The Munich manuscript of the Talmud reads: "Each one's canopy will be scorched by the canopy of his fellow." On this passage, see *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 14; *Zohar* 1:39a (*Heikh*), 130a, 231b–232a; 2:246b (*Heikh*); 3:196b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 348; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 374.

On the soul's perfection in this world, see Saadiah Gaon, *Emunot ve-De'ot* 6:4; *Zohar* 1:235a, 245b; 2:95b Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 299; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 46–47 (translated in Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, 148); idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 19–26; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:752–54.

On the theme of the hidden righteous, see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 251–56. The clause "who is not mentioned explicitly" renders דלא אתפרש (*de-la itperash*). See *Or Yaqar*; *Zohar* 3:157a (above, p. 7 at note 17). Vital adopts another sense of the clause: "who is not separated," that is, separated from God.

The phrase "all of whose matters" renders וכל מלוי (*ve-khol milloi*), which can also mean "all of whose words." This latter

sense could allude to the pseudepigraphic style of the *Zohar*. Cf. above, note 71.

94. **When the blessed Holy One said to Moses…** When God instructed Moses about the impending death of Aaron, Moses' power was weakened, because Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret* (the trunk of the divine body) and Aaron symbolizes *Ḥesed* (the divine right arm).

Although Eleazar took the place of his father, Aaron, he did not do so completely, since the clouds of glory, which protected Israel due to the merit of Aaron, disappeared temporarily when Aaron died.

See BT *Ta'anit* 9a: "Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah says, 'Three fine leaders arose for Israel, namely Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; and through them were given three fine presents, namely the well [that miraculously accompanied Israel through the desert], the cloud [of glory shielding them], and manna. The well, by the merit of Miriam; the pillar of cloud, by the merit of Aaron; manna, by the merit of Moses. When Miriam died, the well disappeared, as is said: *Miriam died there* (Numbers 20:1), and immediately afterward is written *There was no water for the community* (ibid., 2); and it returned by the merit of the two [others, Moses and Aaron]. When Aaron died, the clouds of glory disappeared, as is said: *The Canaanite, king of Arad, heard* (ibid. 21:1). What news did he hear? He heard that Aaron had died and that the clouds of glory had disappeared; and he thought that he was permitted to make war against Israel.' This corresponds to what is written: *All the community saw that Aaron had expired* (ibid. 20:29)—[with reference to which] Rabbi Abbahu said, 'Do not read וַיִּרְאוּ (*va-yir'u*), *they saw*, but rather וַיֵּרָאוּ (*va-yera'u*), *they were seen* [because with the disappearance of the clouds of glory, Israel became visible and exposed].'… Both of them [the well and the cloud] returned by the merit of Moses. When Moses died, all of them disappeared."

See above, notes 57–60. On the passage in *Ta'anit*, see Vol. 8, pp. 157–58, n. 294. On the clouds of glory, see also above, p. 66, n. 39.

The context in Numbers (20:23–29) reads: *YHVH said to Moses and to Aaron at Mount Hor on the border of the land of Edom, saying, "Let Aaron be gathered to his kin, for he shall not come into the land that I have given to the Children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the Waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up Mount Hor. Strip Aaron of his garments and clothe Eleazar his son with them, and Aaron will be gathered up and will die there." Moses did as YHVH had commanded, and they went up Mount Hor before the eyes of all the community. Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and clothed Eleazar his son with them, and Aaron died there on the mountaintop, and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. All the community saw that Aaron had expired, and all the house of Israel bewailed Aaron thirty days*.

95. **Why *before the eyes of all the community*?...** Rabbi Ḥiyya's answer is based on a rabbinic tradition, according to which the Israelites suspected that Moses himself had killed Aaron on the mountain or abandoned him there. Therefore God Himself showed them Aaron's corpse in a cave on the mountain (or outside the cave, or sailing miraculously through the air), and they realized that Aaron had died at God's command.

The description of Aaron as "the most beloved" is based on the tradition that he excelled in resolving disputes and reconciling married couples. See M *Avot* 1:12, in the name of Hillel: "Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving human beings and drawing them near Torah." See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:37, 45d–46a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; B, 24–25; BT *Yoma* 71b, *Sanhedrin* 6b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17; *Kallah Rabbati* 3; *Zohar* 3:60a, 88a.

Midrashic sources interpret the wording *Take Aaron* (*and Eleazar his son and bring them up Mount Hor*) (Numbers 20:25) as implying coaxing. See *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 40; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:19; *Leqaḥ Tov* and *Midrash ha-Gadol*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:119b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. Cf. the same interpretation of *Take Aaron and his sons with him* (Leviticus 8:2) in *Sifra, Millu'im (Tsav)* 1:2, 40d; *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tsav* 14.

On the Israelites' suspecting Moses of having killed (or abandoned) Aaron, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 305; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 41; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:20; *Midrash Petirat Aharon* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:95); Rashi on Numbers 20:29. For the context in Numbers, see the preceding note.

96. **Why Moses and not Aaron?...** Why didn't Aaron undress himself? Because Moses had originally clothed Aaron in the priestly garments when he installed him as high priest. Once Moses removed Aaron's garments, God removed his soul.

See *Sifra, Millu'im (Tsav)* 1:6, 41a. The verse quoted here (in the manuscripts) does not appear in Scripture. The printed editions of the *Zohar* replace it with part of Leviticus 8:7 (describing how Moses clothed Aaron at his installation): *He placed the tunic on him and girded him with the sash and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and girded him with the decorated band of the ephod, with which he tied it to him*. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

97. **a bed and a shining candelabrum...** Since Aaron had faithfully kindled the candelabrum in the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), God now placed a candelabrum by his side at death.

Medieval sources differ as to whether Aaron lit the lamps of the candelabrum once a day (in the evening) or

twice a day (both evening and morning). Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya adopts the view of Maimonides, that Aaron did so twice a day. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Temidin u-Musafin* 3:12; *Miqdash Melekh*; Vol. 8, pp. 501–2, n. 34.

On Aaron's bed (or coffin), see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 305; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 25; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17; *Midrash Petirat Aharon* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:95).

98. **The mouth of the cave was open…** To prove that Aaron had died at God's command and was now being honored.

On the mouth of the cave as being open, see *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 41; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:20; *Midrash Petirat Aharon* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:95). On the bed emerging and entering the cave, cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 305; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17; *Midrash Petirat Aharon* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:95).

On the clouds of glory disappearing at Aaron's death (and the verse in Numbers), see above, note 94; Vol. 8, pp. 157–58, n. 294; *Targum Onqelos* and Rashi on Numbers 20:29. On Aaron's being "most beloved," see above, note 95. A number of the sources cited there quote the verse in Numbers.

99. **Why were these three lofty, holy siblings…** Why weren't Miriam, Aaron, and Moses all buried in the same vicinity, rather than being scattered in three separate locations?

The clause "where Israel was about to be endangered" likely refers to the people's endangering themselves by sinning. See Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 20:28; *Or Yaqar*. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 34:6; BT *Sotah* 14a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 45 (end).

100. **each one died fittingly…** Miriam (who symbolizes *Shekhinah*) died in Kadesh, which is situated on the southern border of Canaan. Its location is described here as "between north and south," alluding to the position

of *Shekhinah* between *Gevurah* (the divine left arm, symbolized by north) and *Ḥesed* (the right arm, symbolized by south).

Aaron (who symbolizes *Ḥesed*) died on Mount Hor, which is located near Kadesh, south of Canaan. Moses died on Mount Abarim, east of Canaan, which is fitting because he symbolizes *Tif'eret* (represented by the east).

Rabbi Shim'on indicates that Mount Abarim "grasped" Mount Hor and "absorbed" Miriam's grave, thereby embracing *Ḥesed* (symbolized by Aaron) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Miriam).

On Miriam's death at Kadesh, see Numbers 20:1–2 (quoted above, note 54). On Aaron's death on Mount Hor, see Numbers 20:23–29 (quoted above, note 94). On Moses' death on Mount Abarim (or Mount Nebo), see Numbers 27:12–14; Deuteronomy 32:48–52; 34:1–8. Mount Abarim is probably the mountain range east of the Dead Sea, one of whose prominent peaks is Mount Nebo.

101. **Even though they are in another, higher world...** Even after death, the souls of the righteous can nullify threatening decrees.

Cf. BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b, where Rabbi Abbahu quotes God as saying: "I rule over humanity. Who rules over Me? The righteous one. For I issue a decree and he abolishes it." See Vol. 7, pp. 90–91, n. 275. Cf. ibid., p. 470, n. 357; p. 472, n. 363.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail*. The simple meaning of the rare word צחצחות (*tsaḥtsaḥot*) is *parched places* (which fits the biblical context), but the *Zohar* often construes it as "radiancies," based on the root צחח (*tsḥḥ*), "to gleam."

102. ***The people spoke against God...*** The *Zohar* links this passage about the Israelites' complaint with a similar one in the preceding chapter (Numbers 20:2–13).

The term אסתליק (*istalliq*), "ascends," means here "pertains" or "(its higher meaning) ascends."

The verse in Numbers reads in full: *The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the desert? For there is no bread and there is no water, and our throat* [or: *very self*; *innards*] *loathes the wretched bread*." The concluding phrase refers to the manna.

103. ***It happened on the third day...*** The third day of Esther's fast (shared by all the Jews of Shushan), preceding her appearance before King Ahasuerus. By the third day, Esther felt physically weak, dominated by spirit.

On the scroll of Esther being "uttered [i.e., composed] in the Holy Spirit," see BT *Megillah* 7a. "The Writings" refers to the third division of the Bible, following the Torah and the Prophets. On "the Writings" as having been composed in the Holy Spirit, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 2:45; David Kimḥi, Commentary on Psalms, intro.

The full verse in Esther reads: *It happened on the third day, that Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royal apparel* [literally: *royalty*], *and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, facing the king's palace, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room facing the entrance of the palace*.

104. **What is *malkhut*?...** The simple sense of the verse is *Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royal apparel*; but Rabbi Yitsḥak reads this hyperliterally: *Esther put on malkhut, royalty*—which according to him refers not to royal garments but to *Malkhut* Herself (also known as *Shekhinah*), who is identified with the Holy Spirit. Out of this Holy Spirit, an ethereal garment was generated for Esther.

See BT *Megillah* 15a: "*It happened on the third day, that Esther put on* מלכות (*malkhut*), *royalty* (Esther 5:1). The verse should read בגדי מלכות (*bigdei malkhut*), *royal apparel*! Rabbi El'azar said in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina, 'This

teaches that the Holy Spirit enveloped her.'" See *Megillah* 14b; above, p. 116 at n. 191.

105. **Why did she attain this place?...** Esther attained the rung of *Malkhut* because she guarded her tongue.

Anyone who engages in evil speech or slander will suffer from that very speech. The Israelites sinned with their tongue by speaking *against God and against Moses* (Numbers 21:5), so they were punished by the serpent, who had slandered God in the Garden of Eden when he spoke enticingly to Eve. Here the phrase "burning like a serpent" alludes to Numbers 21:6: *YHVH sent against the people the fiery serpents, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died*.

See *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 19; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 45; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22; *Midrash Tehillim* 120:3; Rashi on Numbers 21:6. On the serpent's slander in the Garden of Eden, see Vol. 7, p. 332, n. 3. On evil speech as arousing the cosmic Serpent, see *Zohar* 2:264b–265a (*Heikh*); 3:47a, 53a.

On evil speech as causing צרעת (*tsara'at*), "leprosy" (more precisely, "a scaly skin disease"), see Vol. 7, pp. 289–90, n. 106. On the term *tsara'at*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774–76, 816–26. The verse in Esther reads: *Esther did not reveal her relatives or her people, as Mordecai had instructed her*.

106. **in the Targum...** *Targum Onqelos* renders *and against Moses* as *and they quarreled with Moses*.

107. ***Why* העליתונו (*he'elitunu*), *did you bring us up...*** The plural verb implies that the people treated God and Moses equally. Since they slandered God and Moses, they were punished by the descendants of the primordial serpent (who slandered in the Garden of Eden).

According to midrashic sources, the wording *The people spoke against God and against Moses* implies that the Israelites "equated the servant with his Master." See

Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat 19; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 44; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:21; Rashi on Numbers 21:5.

On the slandering serpent, see above, note 105. On the fiery serpents, see Numbers 21:6 (quoted in the same note).

108. **their mouths hissing…** The root לחש (*lḥsh*) means "to whisper, hiss, recite an incantation or charm." Several of these senses apply to the serpent.

The concluding sentence means that this story of the Israelites' complaining pertains, or "(its higher meaning) ascends," to a similar account in the preceding chapter of Numbers. See above, note 102.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *If the snake bites with no* לחש (*laḥash*), *snake-charm* [i.e., before a charm is uttered], *there is no advantage to the expert of incantations*. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 26:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:11; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:2; *Zohar* 2:68b, 268b (*Heikh*); 3:304a (*Tosefet*); *ZḤ* 54a; *ZḤ* 78a (*MhN, Rut*).

109. ***From there* בארה (*be'erah*), *to Be'er*…** The context in Numbers (21:16–18) reads: *From there* בארה (*be'erah*), *to Be'er*, הוא הבאר (*hi ha-be'er*), *which is the well, of which YHVH said to Moses, "Gather the people, that I may give them water." Then did Israel sing this song: "Rise up, O well! Sing out to it. A well dug by princes, delved by nobles of the nation—with a scepter, with their staves."*

The simple sense of בארה (*be'erah*) is *to Be'er*, the final ה (*he*) indicating the direction of movement. Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya ignores this conventional use of the letter *he* and instead focuses on its role as a feminine marker—in this case, alluding to the Divine Feminine, *Shekhinah*. After the flow of emanation has been gathered into the sea of *Shekhinah* and conveyed by Her to those below, She is called בארה (*be'erah*)—"well of ה (*he*)"—the letter ה (*he*) signifying Her full empowerment. At an earlier stage, when *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac) is still filling Her, She is called באר

(*be'er*)—simply "well," without the ה (*he*), since the masculine forces above Her still dominate.

For Rabbi Ḥiyya, the wording of the verse—*From there* בארה (*be'erah*)—may imply that *Shekhinah*'s state of being *be'erah* is preceded by an earlier state, namely Her being simply *be'er*. See *Or Yaqar*. On the association of Isaac with various wells, see Genesis 24:62; 25:11; 26:18–25, 32–33.

110. **היא (*Hi*), *She, is the well*—spelled הוא (*hu*), *he*...** In the Masoretic text of the Torah, the feminine pronoun היא (*hi*), *she*, is usually spelled הִוא (*hi*) and pronounced *hi*. Here Rabbi Ḥiyya construes this spelling as הוא (*hu*), *he*. In other words, the pronunciation *hi, she*, corresponds to *Shekhinah*'s fully empowered state of בארה (*be'erah*); whereas the spelling הוא (*hu*), *he*, corresponds to Her earlier state of באר (*be'er*), when the masculine forces above Her (including *Gevurah*) still dominated.

Rabbi Ḥiyya associates the spelling הוא (*hu*), *he*, with the verse in Numbers. According to its simple sense, this verse reads ועבד הלוי הוא (*Ve-avad ha-levi hu*), *The Levite, he alone, will serve* [*at the Tent of Meeting*]. Here, this is construed as *The Levite* [symbolizing *Gevurah*] *will serve hu, he* [or: *him*]. According to this reading of the verse, *hu* (*he*) designates *Binah*, from whom *the Levite* (*Gevurah*) conveys the flow to *Shekhinah*. Although often pictured as the Divine Mother, *Binah* is also characterized as World of the Male (including the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). *Binah*'s hidden and concealed nature corresponds to the third-person pronoun *hu, he*—since this *sefirah* cannot be addressed directly (in the second person) but only indirectly (in the third).

On the sefirotic reading of the verse in Numbers, and on *Binah* as *hu* (and as World of the Male), see above, p. 130, n. 234. On the Masoretic spelling הוא (*hi*), see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §321.

111. **Wherever it is written הוא (*hu*), *he*...** According to kabbalistic symbolism, the letter ה (*he*)—often a feminine marker—alludes to the Divine Female, *Shekhinah*. The letter ו

(*vav*)—whose numerical value is six—alludes to the Male, *Tif'eret* (together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him, from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). The final letter, א (*alef*)—whose numerical value is one—alludes to *Keter*, who includes the potential or essence of all the *sefirot* in complete unity.

112. **Although below...** Although the people of Israel exist here below, they are linked with the highest sefirotic realm, the primordial unity of *Keter*.

In the biblical text, the verse in Psalms is written: *He made us*, ולא אנחנו (*ve-lo anaḥnu*), *and not we ourselves*. According to a Masoretic note, however, the verse should be read *He made us* ולו אנחנו (*ve-lo anaḥnu*), *and we are His*. Here, Rabbi Abba alludes to a mystical interpretation of the verse: *He made us* ולא׳ אנחנו (*ve-la-alef anaḥnu*), *and we belong to the alef*, namely to oneness. See *Bahir* 96 (141); Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 105, n. 3; *Zohar* 1:120b; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:134b (*IR*); above, p. 186, n. 58; Vital; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

113. **The רוח (*ruaḥ*), wind, of water...** The term *ruaḥ* means both "wind" and "spirit." As mentioned above (note 104), *Shekhinah* is known as רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), "the Holy Spirit." Once Her feminine waters are stimulated by Her *ruaḥ*, masculine waters from above flow into Her, and through Her to all below.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Awake, north wind! Come, south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its luscious fruits*. In the *Zohar*, this *garden* symbolizes *Shekhinah*. The verse in Psalms reads: *He lets* רוחו (*ruḥo*), *His breath* [or: *His wind*], *blow—waters flow*.

114. **in everything, one must arouse by action or by word...** In order to arouse a spiritual potency above, one must perform an action or utter a word here below.

On the need to manifest action, see *Zohar* 1:99b–100a, 161a, 220b (standard editions); 2:47b; 3:37a–b, 66b, 86b, 92b, 95a, 99b, 105a, 118b–119a, 120b, 149a; *ZḤ* 43c.

According to an essential principle of Kabbalah, “By an action below is aroused an action above.” See *Zohar* 1:35a, 77b–78a, 82b, 86b, 88a, 156b, 164a–b, 220a (standard editions), 233a, 235a, 244a; 2:31b, 35b, 47b, 125a, 184a–b, 232b, 265a (*Heikh*); 3:30b–31b, 36b, 38b, 40a–b, 47a–b, 66a, 92a–b, 105a, 110b, 112b, 113b, 118a, 119a, 145a (*Piq*), 152a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 144; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1160–61. On the need for word and/or action, see *Zohar* 1:75b, 99b–100a, 115a, 220b (standard editions); 3:99a, 105a, 112b, 149a, 184a, 285a.

115. **הוא הבאר (*Hu ha-be’er*), *He is the well…*** As explained above (note 110), in the Masoretic text of the Torah, the feminine pronoun היא (*hi*), *she*, is usually spelled הִוא (*hi*) and pronounced *hi*. Here, Rabbi Shim’on construes this spelling as הוּא (*hu*), *he*. The pronunciation *hi*, *she*, alludes to *Shekhinah*’s state of being alone, entirely female. This corresponds to the term באֵרה (*be’erah*), whose final letter—ה (*he*)—is often a feminine marker. The spelling הוּא (*hu*), *he*, alludes to the union of male and female, which assumes a masculine name. This corresponds to the term באֵר (*be’er*), *well*, without the letter (and feminine marker) ה (*he*).

On *be’erah* and *be’er*, see above, note 109. On the concluding sentence, cf. *Zohar* 2:38b, 39b. See also BT *Yevamot* 88b, 117b; *Sotah* 31b, 47b; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

116. ***Of which YHVH said to Moses…*** The context (Numbers 21:16–18) reads: *From there* באֵרה (*be’erah*), *to Be’er*, הוא הבאר (*hi ha-be’er*), *which is the well, of which YHVH said to Moses, “Gather the people, that I may give them water.” Then did Israel sing this song: “Rise up, O well! Sing out to it. A well dug by princes, delved by nobles of the nation—with a scepter, with their staves.”*

According to rabbinic tradition, this well miraculously accompanied Israel through the desert. When Miriam died, it disappeared; but then it reappeared through the merit of

Moses and Aaron. (See above, notes 55, 94.) The thirteen streams are intended for the twelve tribes plus the priests and Levites.

Israel's song was "a word of truth" because it alluded to a sefirotic secret. The *well* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who has been *dug by princes* (that is, by *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*) and *delved by nobles of the nation* (that is, by *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the noble patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). See *Zohar* 1:235a; 2:197b; 3:62a, 150a (Vol. 8, pp. 505–6, n. 46), 286a; *ZḤ* 50b–c. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 21:18; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 21; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:26.

On the streams issuing from the well, see *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus 426; *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:12–13; *Targum Yerushalmi* (and ibid., frag.), Numbers 21:19; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 21; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 48; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:26; *Midrash Tehillim* 5:1. Cf. the image of thirteen rivers of balsam, mentioned above, note 44.

On the wondrous manner in which the well supplied water for Israel, see also *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:11; *Sotah* 4:2; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:13; *Tanḥuma, Bemidbar* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bemidbar* 2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 1:2; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 4:876–79.

117. **Whoever wishes to arouse something above...** In order to stimulate and draw down the flow from above, one must perform a holy act properly or speak a holy word fittingly. Although everyone prays in synagogue, trying to stimulate blessings from above, few succeed in this endeavor because they do not know the true significance of the words they utter.

See above, note 114. On this interpretation of the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 3:297a; *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*, 157b.

118. **Israel spoke these words...** By singing truly to the divine well, *Shekhinah*, they stimulated the flow of water and blessing. See above, note 116.

119. **even those sorcerers of the world…** Even though they are trying to stimulate demonic forces, they still must perform certain rituals precisely or recite incantations correctly.

120. ***They called on the name of Baal…*** In the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, those prophets failed to call forth fire from heaven in the name of their god, for two reasons. First, because God had not authorized Baal to perform this miracle. Second, because God had made the false prophets forget the correct incantation.

In the biblical context, as Elijah prays for fire, he pleads: *Answer me, YHVH, answer me, that this people may know that You, YHVH, are God, and that it is You who turned their heart backward* (1 Kings 18:37). The final clause probably means "It is You who caused Israel to fall back into idolatry," since God causes all things. Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets this as "It is You who made the prophets of Baal forget what was in their heart (or mind)." On this verse, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 6:3; David Kimḥi on 1 Kings 18:37. On God interfering in the magical process, cf. *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:5.

1 Kings 18:26 reads in full: *They took the bull that he had given them, and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning to noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice and none answering, so they hopped about on the altar that he had made*. The wording quoted here in the *Zohar—But there was no voice and none hearing*—derives from a few verses later (1 Kings 18:29).

121. **how to perform an action properly…** How to perform a *mitsvah* properly and recite the words of prayer correctly. But the masses know how to do these things; so what is the value of the righteous, who know the deep significance of holy action and prayer, and who perform these with contemplative devotion?

122. **Those who do not know the essence…** People who perform rituals and recite prayers correctly—but perfunctorily, without deep devotion or awareness—draw down only a diluted flow of blessing, from behind God's shoulders, as it were. Those who know more deeply and contemplate what they do are able to generate blessings from the sublime realm of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), or Thought.

The letters of the Name *YHVH* allude to the entire span of *sefirot*, so those who contemplate the sefirotic significance and effect of their holy deeds and words fulfill this Name, which is thus "blessed through them." On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

"A treasury" renders טסטוורא (*tistavra*), which is recorded in Es3 and P5. This neologism is apparently a playful variation on תסוורתא (*tisvarta*)—or תסברתא (*tisbarta*), טסברא (*tisbera*)—"treasure, treasury," deriving from Greek *thesaurus* (which, of course, is the basis of the English words "thesaurus, treasure, treasury"). On God's תיסבריות (*tisbariyyot*), or תסוריות (*tisvariyyot*), "treasuries," see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:11; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *tsvvr*. On the association of "treasure" or "treasury" with "providence," see Isaac Abravanel on Exodus 19:5 (*You will be a treasure for Me among all the peoples*); Leviticus 23:26–34.

123. ***YHVH said to Moses…*** The context in Numbers (21:33–34) reads: *They turned and went up on the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out to meet them in battle, he and all his people* [or: *his troops*] *at Edrei. YHVH said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for into your hand I have given him and all his people* [or: *his troops*] *and his land, and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites who dwells in Heshbon."*

124. ***She does not fear for her household because of snow…*** The concluding chapter of Proverbs portrays the ideal woman, who in Kabbalah symbolizes *Shekhinah*, also known as Assembly of Israel.

Shekhinah imbibes the divine flow from two sides: Compassion on the right and Judgment on the left, each of which finds a place within Her that is ready to receive that particular quality. *Shekhinah*'s *household* includes the angels and Israel below. She *does not fear for her household because of snow* (symbolizing Judgment), since Judgment (also symbolized by red) is mingled with Compassion (symbolized by white). Rabbi Yehudah plays with שָׁנִים (*shanim*), *crimson*, and שְׁנַיִם (*shenayim*), "two."

On snow as signifying Judgment, see *Zohar* 1:6b (Vol. 1, p. 40, n. 280), 16a. On *shanim* and *shenayim*, see *Zohar* 1:238b. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 66.

125. ***Do not fear* אותו (*oto*), *him*...** Rabbi Yehudah claims that in this (and one other) verse in the Torah, the word אותו (*oto*), *him* (or *it*), contains the letter ו (*vav*) twice—rather than just once, as it is normally spelled: אֹתוֹ (*oto*). The reason for this unusual spelling is to indicate the meaning אות (*ot*), "sign."

The context in Deuteronomy is the obligation to return lost property. The verse reads: *You shall gather it into your house and it shall be with you until your brother seeks it and you shall return it to him*. According to rabbinic law, when the owner comes to claim his lost article, he must demonstrate his ownership by specifying certain identifying marks. (See M *Bava Metsi'a* 2:7; *Or Yaqar*.) In support of this requirement, Rabbi Yehudah reads the verse *and it shall be with you until your brother seeks* אותו (*oto*), *its sign*. He proceeds to construe the verse in Numbers similarly.

On *oto* as meaning *his sign*, see *Zohar* 1:47b, 94a, 112b. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:1 (and parallels).

Actually, in the Masoretic text of the Torah, the word אתו (*oto*) is always written with just one ו (*vav*). Rabbi Yehudah's claim here to the contrary is playfully creative. See *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 21:34; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the

phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

126. **Og joined Abraham…** According to a midrashic tradition, Og is identified with Abraham's servant, Eliezer. Since the verse in Genesis states that *all the men of his* [namely Abraham's] *household… were circumcised with him*, Rabbi Yehudah concludes that Og was circumcised too. Possessing the sign of the covenant, King Og felt confident that he could defeat Israel. After all, he had obtained the merit of circumcision even before Abraham's son Isaac was born.

On Og's being identified with Eliezer, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16; *Soferim*, add., 1:2. The context in Genesis (17:26–27) reads: *On that very day, Abraham was circumcised; and Ishmael his son, and all the men of his household, those born in the household and those purchased with silver from foreigners, were circumcised with him*.

127. **Moses was afraid…** How could he eliminate the merit of Og's covenantal sign? Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret* (the trunk of the divine body). To eliminate Og's covenantal merit, he would need the power of the divine right arm (*Ḥesed*), associated with Abraham (with whom Og was circumcised). But the "right arm" is symbolized by Aaron, who had just died. And although Aaron was succeeded by his son Eleazar, the latter served as "the right of the moon," namely of Joshua and *Shekhinah* (both symbolized by the moon)—and not the right of Moses and *Tif'eret* (both symbolized by the sun).

According to a rabbinic tradition, "The face of Moses was like the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon." See *Sifrei*, Numbers 140; BT *Bava Batra* 75a. On Aaron as the right arm, see above, notes 57, 59.

128. ***Do not fear* אותו (*oto*)…** God tells Moses that he should *not fear* אותו (*oto*), *his sign*. Moses can overwhelm Og with his left (and weaker) hand, since by committing acts of

sexual immorality Og has impaired his covenantal sign of circumcision.

Moses' left hand probably alludes to Hur; see above, note 59. On *hand* as indicating the left hand, see above, p. 181, n. 46. On *oto* as meaning *his sign*, see above, note 125.

129. **powerful—from the sons of the mighty…** According to Deuteronomy 3:11: *Only Og king of Bashan remained from the rest of the Rephaim. Look, his bedstead, an iron bedstead, is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits its length and four cubits its width by the cubit of a man*. These dimensions would make his bed about thirteen-and-a-half feet long and six feet wide.

On the gigantic nature of the Rephaim, see Deuteronomy 2:10–11. The clause "even though he was powerful—from the sons of the mighty" can also be rendered "even though he was more powerful than the sons of the mighty."

On the destruction of Og, see Numbers 21:35; Deuteronomy 3:3–7; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 25; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 55; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:32.

130. ***and your seed after you…*** The full verse reads: *I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you through their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you*.

1. ***Balak son of Zippor saw…*** The context in Numbers (22:2–4) describes the reaction of Balak, king of Moab, to the approach of the Israelites: *Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. Moab was very terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab loathed the Children of Israel. Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now, this assembly will lick up* [or: *chew up*] *everything around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." Balak son of Zippor was king over Moab at that time*.

Rabbi Shim'on explains that Balak *saw* in two ways, both with his eyes and "through the window of wisdom," that is, by means of astrology—as implied here by "the skirt tails of the stars." This astrological method was also employed by King Abimelech, who according to the verse in Genesis, *gazed through the window and saw—and there was Isaac playing with* [or: *fondling*] *Rebekah his wife*. Similarly, when the mother of the Canaanite commander Sisera discovered that her son had been murdered by Jael (wife of Heber the Kenite), she saw this through an astrological *window*.

See Judges 4:17–21; *Zohar* 1:140b; 2:172a–b; 3:113a; *Yeraḥme'el*, ed. Yassif, 6:3; Joseph Albo, *Iqqarim* 4:43; Malbim on Judges 5:28. The full verse in Judges reads: *Through the window she gazed, the mother of Sisera moaned through the lattice: "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why so late the clatter of his wheels?"*

"Window" renders משקופא (*mashqofa*). The Hebrew term משקוף (*mashqof*) means "lintel," but here *mashqofa* connotes "window, window opening," perhaps based on שקפים (*shequfim*) in 1 Kings 6:4; 7:4; or on the verb השקיף (*hishqif*), "to look down from above; gaze" (see both Genesis 26:8 [quoted here] and 2 Kings 9:30, where this verb refers to looking out of a window). See *Zohar* 2:143a, 172a, 181a, 241b; *ZḤ* 15c (*MhN*), 76c (*MhN, Rut*), 90b–d (*MhN, Rut*).

2. ***Son of* צפור (*Tsippor*), *Zippor…*** The word *tsippor* means "bird." Although other reasons have been offered as to why

Balak was called *son of a bird*, Rabbi Shim'on explains that this refers to Balak's expertise in bird divination.

Below (p. 386 at n. 301), Rabbi El'azar explains *son of a bird* as implying that Balak was descended from Jethro, who fled from his persecutors like a bird. For other interpretations of the phrase, see *Leqaḥ Tov* and *Ba'al ha-Turim*, ad loc. On the spiritual significance of bird divination (augury or ornithomancy) in this section of the *Zohar*, see Bar-Asher, "Tsippor ha-Nefesh." Cf. *Zohar* 2:6b.

3. **fly away to *eyes uncovered*...** The bird would fly away to Aza'el, one of the fallen angels.

According to legend, the angels Uzza and Aza'el opposed the creation of Adam and Eve, fell from heaven, and were attracted to *the daughters of men* (Genesis 6:2). They were punished by being bound in chains of iron in the Mountains of Darkness, from where they still manage to wreak havoc as masters of sorcery. According to the *Zohar*, the prophet Balaam consulted these two fallen angels. Their respective Zoharic names—*falling* and *eyes uncovered*—derive from a description of Balaam in Numbers 24:4: *Utterance of one who hears God's sayings, who beholds a vision of Shaddai*, נופל וגלוי עינים (*nofel u-glu'i einayim*), *falling with eyes uncovered* [literally: *falling and eyes uncovered*]. (Cf. ibid., 16.) See above, pp. 24–25, n. 61; below, p. 366, n. 236; p. 461, nn. 537–38.

4. ידוע **(*Yaddu'a*)...** This name is based on the biblical term ידעני (*yidde'oni*), whose precise meaning is uncertain but which derives from the root ידע (*yd'*), "to know," and has been rendered *as* "wizard-spirit; spirit of divination." According to M *Sanhedrin* 7:7, "A *yidde'oni* is one who speaks from his mouth." According to BT *Sanhedrin* 65b, "A *yidde'oni* is one who places the bone of a ידוע (*yaddu'a*) in his mouth, and it speaks on its own." Rashi identifies the *yaddu'a* as an animal, whereas Maimonides identifies it as a bird. Here, Rabbi Shim'on adopts the latter view.

See Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:11; Rashi on *Sanhedrin* 65a, s.v. *yidde'oni*; and on *Sanhedrin* 65b, s.v. *yaddu'a*; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Avodah Zarah* 6:2; idem, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 7:7; idem, *Sefer ha-Mitsvot*, negative commandment 9; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 282; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6:123, n. 720; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 395, n. 141; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

5. **He said, 'Israel is very'…** And the bird completed the sentence. The word רב (*rav*), *numerous*, alludes to God, "the supreme *Rav*, Great One, who moved in their midst."

6. **Types of Sorcery of the Ancient Kasdiel…** One of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*.

The name קשדיאל (*Qasdi'el*), "Kasdiel," is probably based on כשדים (*kasdim*), "Chaldeans," which originally referred to an ethnic group of Aramaic-speaking people who infiltrated into Babylonia, but in Hellenistic times designated astrologers and sorcerers. See, e.g., Daniel 2:2, 10. In his *Sod Yetsi'at Mitsrayim*, 82a, Moses de León describes an Egyptian magician named כשדיאל (*Kasdi'el*). See Scholem.

The phrase "burnished bronze" appears in Ezekiel's description of the legs of the creatures carrying the sapphire divine throne (Ezekiel 1:7), and in Daniel's description of the arms and feet of the celestial being who appeared to him (Daniel 10:6). The clause "it utters great things" derives from Daniel's dream-vision (7:8, 20). On the Zoharic library, see above, p. 78, n. 70.

7. ***son of tsippor, a bird…*** See above, note 2.

8. ***YHVH said, 'From Bashan I will bring back…*** God's declarations, such as this one, are guaranteed; so the moment that He utters a word, it is virtually actualized. But human beings, whose days are fleeting, display impatience. The verse in Psalms actually begins: אדני (*Adonai*), *The Lord, said*.

God diminishes His overwhelming radiance and holiness, so that He can convey blessing to people on earth in a bearable fashion.

9. ***YHVH said*—this refers to the time to come…** When God will resurrect Israel from the dead.

In its simple sense, the term *Bashan* refers to a region in the upper Transjordan, east of the Sea of Galilee. Here, the *Zohar* draws on a midrashic interpretation: "מבשן (*Mi-bashan*), *From Bashan, I will bring back*—מבין שיני (*mi-bein shinei*), from between the teeth of, lions *I will bring back*." In other words, even those among Israel who have been devoured by wild beasts will be resurrected. See *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:45; BT *Gittin* 57b; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:13; 140:1.

The clause "all great beasts and towering mountains, intermingling" means that these beasts prowl the mountains.

The image of "the mighty wild ass of the wilderness" derives from a rabbinic interpretation of Numbers 21:1 (the same chapter in which Og and Sihon appear): *The Canaanite, king of Arad, the Negeb dweller, heard that Israel had come by way of Atharim, and he did battle with Israel and took some of them captive*. See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 3a: "Sihon, Arad, and Canaan are all the same. סיחון (*Siḥon*), because he resembled סייח (*seyaḥ*), a foal. Canaan, after his kingdom. And what was his [actual] name? Arad. Some say: ערד (*Arad*), because he resembled ערוד (*arod*), a wild ass, in the wilderness. Canaan, after his kingdom. And what was his name? Sihon." Here, the *Zohar* identifies Og (rather than Sihon) as the wild ass.

10. **סיחון (*Siḥon*), Sihon…** His name is associated with סייחא (*sayḥa*), "a foal," of the wilderness. See the passage from BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* quoted in the preceding note.

Moab relied on Sihon, king of the Amorites. The verse in Numbers demonstrates that Moab and the Amorite territory share a border, which was marked by the Arnon River.

11. **you mighty who rule over other nations…** Namely, the heavenly princes assigned over the seventy nations of the world. See above, p. 50, n. 140.

12. **all those rulers…** The heavenly princes appointed over the seven nations of Canaan sought to restore the kingdom of the Amorites to its original glory.

The context in Numbers (21:27–28) reads: *Therefore do* המושלים (*ha-moshelim*), *the bards, say: "Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt* [or: *let it stand built*]; *may the city of Sihon be well founded. For fire has come forth from Heshbon, flame from the town of Sihon, consuming Ar of Moab, the notables of Bamoth by the Arnon*. Here, the *Zohar* construes *ha-moshelim, the bards*, as if derived from a different (but identically spelled) verbal root, yielding *the rulers*—namely the heavenly princes of the seven nations.

13. **the flame of the Kingdom…** Namely the Kingdom of Heaven.

14. ***the city of Sihon*… unidentified…** The heavenly princes of the seven nations referred vaguely to Heshbon as *"the city of Sihon,"* without identifying it by name, thinking that thereby they could succeed in rebuilding it. But then they realized that the power of God (Israel's "supreme Master") had dashed their plans. See above, note 5.

15. **he who was shielding you…** Namely, Sihon, king of the Amorites.

The association of מאד (*me'od*), *very*, with death derives from midrashic interpretations of Genesis 1:31: *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was* טוב מאד (*tov me'od*), *very good*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5: "In the Torah of Rabbi Me'ir it was found written: *'… and look*, טוב מות (*tov mavet*), *death is good.'*"

Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:10 (per Oxford MS 147, Paris MS 149, and *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 16): "Rabbi Shemu'el son of Rav Yitsḥak said, '*Look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life; *very*—this is the Angel of Death.'" According to this midrashic source, the Angel of Death is *very good* because

he kills those who fail to accumulate good deeds. According to *Zohar* 2:149b, he is *very good* because the awareness of mortality stimulates a person to return to God. See Vol. 5, p. 372, nn. 516–17; p. 442, n. 711.

The full verse in Numbers 22 reads: *Moab was very terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab loathed the Children of Israel*.

16. ***For they were* רב (*rav*), *numerous*...** As mentioned in the preceding note, the verse reads: *Moab was very terrified of the people, for they were* רב (*rav*), *numerous*. *The Zohar* construes *rav* as *great*, and relates this adjective to the contrast between Jacob (or Israel) and Esau (representing Edom or, here, any of Israel's enemies as they approached the Promised Land).

Although Esau emerged from the womb before Jacob and was thus *rav*, *the elder*, God had informed their mother, Rebekah, that *rav*, *the elder* (namely Esau), *shall serve the younger* (namely Jacob). As Israel neared the land of Canaan, they became *rav*, *great*, and the *great* nations confronting them became small. Moab realized this because "they saw that Israel prevailed above and below"—that is, that they had toppled not only Sihon (the Amorite king) and all his forces, but also the heavenly princes appointed over the Amorites.

The full verse in Obadiah reads: *Behold, I make you least* [or: *small*] *among the nations; you are utterly despised*. This is part of a prophecy addressed to Edom, who is identified with Esau (according to Genesis 36:1). In rabbinic literature, Esau and Edom often represent Rome, and in medieval literature they often represent Christendom or Christian rule.

According to rabbinic tradition, God first punishes or defeats a nation's heavenly prince and then deals with the earthly nation itself. This notion is often linked with Isaiah 24:21: *YHVH will punish the host of the heights on high and*

the kings of the earth upon the earth. See Vol. 8, p. 476, n. 52.

The full verse in Genesis (spoken by God to Rebekah) reads: *Two nations are in your womb, two peoples from your loins shall issue. People over people shall prevail, and the elder shall serve the younger*. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites*.

17. **yet it is not just...** It may not seem fair or just to transfer the birthright from Esau to Jacob (or Israel). However, Esau represents the demonic outer shell, which appears first but then needs to be removed in order to reveal the inner kernel—namely Israel. Similarly, Esau represents the outer foreskin, which needs to be removed (in the rite of circumcision) in order to reveal the covenant, associated with Israel.

On the shell preceding the kernel, see *Zohar* 2:108b; Farber-Ginat, "Qelippah Qodemet li-Fri." On the image of shell(s) and kernel, see also *Zohar* 1:19b–20a (Vol. 1, p. 151, n. 341), 44b; 2:15b (*MhN*), 131a, 140b, 147b, 213a, 233b; 3:259a–b, 305b (*Tosefet*); below, p. 357, n. 206; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 156–60; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 239; Altmann, *Studies*, 172–79; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 574–79; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463–64, 509; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 20–27.

18. ***Moab said...*** The full verse reads: *Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now, this assembly will lick up* [or: *chew up*] *everything around us as the ox licks up the grass of the field."* For the context, see above, note 1.

19. ***He showed me Joshua the high priest...*** The full verse in Zechariah reads: *He showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of* YHVH, והשטן (*ve-ha-satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him*. For the biblical context and other *Zohar* passages dealing with this account, see above, p. 118, n. 195.

The conclusion (“and those presenting claims…”) refers to angels who could incline either toward mercy (on the right) or harsh judgment (on the left).

20. **For when human spirits depart…** They are judged in heaven.

The verse in Psalms reads: *If You keep account of sins, O Yah*, אדני (*Adonai*), *Lord, who will stand* [or: *survive*]? Here Rabbi Ḥiyya replaces the epithet *Adonai* with *YHVH*. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 31, 145a; *Nitsotsei Zohar*, n. 2. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24. On this verse, see *Zohar* 3:115a.

21. **Here one should examine…** Since King David the Psalmist mentions the Divine Name *Yah*, why he does add another name: *YHVH?* Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that (aside from the name *Yah*) the verse includes “two rungs (or names) of Compassion.” If there are so many sins that they mount up to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* (known together as *Yah*), then “here is *YHVH*,” who designates Compassion. And if even the name *YHVH* “is aroused in Judgment,” interrupting the flow of blessing through all the lower sefirotic rungs, there is still the compassionate rung of *Binah*, toward whom one can turn in *teshuvah*. She is known as *Who*. Thus the conclusion of the verse is no longer a rhetorical question (*Who will stand*?), but rather a declaration: *Who* (namely *Binah*) *will stand* (for us). From Her, “all paths (of *teshuvah*) open.”

Similarly, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the conclusion of the verse in Lamentations not as a rhetorical question (*who will heal you*?), but rather as a declaration: *Who* (namely *Binah*) *will heal you*.

The name *Who* implies that a seeker may inquire about *Binah*, unlike even higher realms, which are so inaccessible that they cannot even be questioned or explored. Still, one should not expect any clear or conclusive answers about the nature of *Binah*. Rather, the mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See

Simeon Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:91a: “Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer.”

Already in the Midrash, *Who* appears as a divine name designating “the one to whom Israel said at the [Red] Sea, *Who is like You?* (Exodus 15:11).” See *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:13; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:17; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 16:3, all of which construe the verset in Lamentations (*Who will heal you?*) not as a question but as a declaration. On *Binah* as *Who*, see *Zohar* 1:1b–2a, 3b–4a, 29b–30a, 45b, 85b–86a, 237b; 2:105a, 126b–127a, 138a, 139b, 197b, 226a, 231b–232a; 3:204a.

The name יה (*Yah*) signifies *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* because its first letter resembles the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* and its second letter is the feminine marker ה (*he*), alluding to the Divine Mother, *Binah*. On *Binah* and *teshuvah* (or as *teshuvah*)—from whom all emerges and to whom all ultimately returns—see *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:106a–b; 3:15b–16b, 40b, 74b–75a, 89b, 122a, 202b.

In rabbinic tradition, the names *YHVH* and *Elohim* signify, respectively, Compassion and Judgment. See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; 14:1; 33:3; 73:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; BT *Berakhot* 60b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 43; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va’era* 4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 167a; *Midrash Tehillim* 56:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; 6:1–3; 30:13. On the reading *YHVH* in the verse from Psalms, see the preceding note.

In the clause “all rungs are obstructed by Judgment,” the phrase “are obstructed” renders אסתימו (*issetimu*). *Derekh Emet* (ed. Ḥamiẓ) reads here instead אסכימו (*askimu*), “concur,” yielding the sense “all rungs concur in Judgment,” that is, all the lower *sefirot* confirm the harsh Judgment.

The full verse in Lamentations reads: *What can I take as a witness to you? What can I compare to you, O Fair Jerusalem? What can I liken to you to console you, O fair*

Virgin of Zion? For your ruin is vast as the ocean; who will heal you [or: *can heal you*]?

22. **Joshua son of Jehozadak…** As the high priest, he entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. Yet even he was judged after death in the Heavenly Academy (which is identified here as the Heavenly Court). On his righteousness, see BT *Sanhedrin* 93a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 33.

23. **Such are the ways of that Heavenly Academy…** The person's soul is judged there by the "sons of the King," namely souls of the righteous.

The "column of flashing flame" enables souls to ascend to heaven. On this column, see above, p. 29, n. 74. On the spirit being "wrapped in an airy spirit blowing through that column," cf. *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 276 (133).

24. **creating innovations in her…** In Torah. Such innovations are treasured in the Heavenly Academy. See above, p. 145, n. 282.

25. **If the word is of another kind…** If the innovative interpretation of Torah is unworthy or blasphemous.

On the exclamation "Woe for that shame!" see BT *Bava Batra* 75a: "Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, '… The blessed Holy One will fashion a canopy for each and every [righteous] person befitting his honor.'… Rabbi Ḥanina said, '… Each one will be scorched by the canopy of his fellow. Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!'" See above, p. 217, n. 93.

26. **when the blessed Holy One is disputing…** Rabbi Ḥiyya is alluding here to a Talmudic story about Rabbah son of Naḥmani (in BT *Bava Metsi'a* 86a). On the day of Rabbah's death, there was a dispute in the Heavenly Academy concerning a certain doubtful case of purity or impurity. God Himself ruled "Pure"; whereas all the members of the Academy maintained "Impure." "They said, 'Who will decide it? Rabbah son of Naḥmani will decide it,'"

since he claimed expertise in the laws of purity and impurity. So a messenger was sent to take Rabbah's soul; and as he expired, he declared, "Pure, pure."

27. **If so...** If a person is judged only after death (in the Heavenly Academy), then his death is undeserved and unfair. And if he *is* judged before dying, then why should he be judged again in the Academy?

28. **For surely a person departs...** No one dies before being judged for the actions he committed during his lifetime; but before one can be admitted to the supernal abode of the righteous, he must be judged again in the Heavenly Academy.

29. **like someone hurling a stone from a sling...** See BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "The souls of the righteous are treasured away under the Throne of Glory, as is said: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life* (1 Samuel 25:29). Those of the wicked are continually muzzled, while one angel stands at one end of the world and another stands at the other end, and they sling their souls [i.e., the souls of the wicked] to each other, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (ibid.)."

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34; David Kimḥi on the verse in Samuel; *Zohar* 1:77b, 128a, 217b; 2:59a, 99b, 103a, 106a, 142b; 3:185b–186a, 213b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 351–53 (and n. 171, where Scholem cites De León's likely source in Jacob ha-Kohen's *Sefer ha-Orah*); idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 373 (and Wolfson's n. 6), 399; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 67–68.

The phrase "from a sling" renders בקרטיפא (*be-qartifa*). *Qartifa* is a Zoharic neologism, whose meaning here ("sling") matches that of two other neologisms: קירטא (*qirta*) and קוספיתא (*quspita*). See Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345–48, 352, 383–93.

The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail's blessing for David) reads: *If a person rises to pursue you, to seek your life, the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of*

life with YHVH your God, and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling.

30. ***He showed me Joshua the high priest…*** For the full verse, see above, note 19. The "Youth" is Metatron, who heads the Heavenly Academy. See above, pp. 5–6, n. 12; pp. 133–34, n. 245.

31. **והשטן (*Ve-ha-satan*), *and Satan…*** The verse reads: והשטן (*ve-ha-satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him*. See above, note 19.

The phrase *Give, give!* derives from Proverbs 30:15: *The leech has two daughters—"Give!" "Give!"* In the biblical context, this saying refers to a greedy person or to someone constantly leeching off others. It may also be a warning that a greedy parent engenders greedy children. Anatomically, the leech has two suckers, one at each end, pictured in this verse as *two daughters*.

In rabbinic sources, the *leech* represents Hell, whose forces (*daughters*) crave more and more wicked victims. See *Midrash Mishlei* 17:1; 30:15; BT *Avodah Zarah* 17a; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5:49. Cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 7:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 31:9; *Zohar* 1:110b (*MhN*), 111a (*ST*); 2:56a; 3:80b, 135a (*IR*), 303b (*Tosefet*).

32. ***YHVH said to Satan…*** The full verse reads: *YHVH said to* השטן (*ha-satan*), *the Accuser* [or: *Satan*], *"May YHVH rebuke you, ha-satan, O Accuser* [or: *O Satan*]; *may YHVH, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"* For the biblical context, see above, p. 118, n. 195.

Rabbi Ḥiyya interprets the two rebukes as directed respectively to Dumah (known as *Satan*) and to a higher Satan, who is the source of Hell.

Dumah, literally "silence," designates the netherworld in the Bible. See Psalms 94:17: *Were not YHVH a help to me, my soul would have nearly dwelt in dumah*. Cf. Psalms 115:17. In rabbinic literature Dumah is the angel in charge of souls of the dead (BT *Berakhot* 18b, *Shabbat* 152b,

Sanhedrin 94a). In the *Zohar* he retains this role and oversees Hell.

On Satan (or the demonic left side) as the source of Hell, see Vol. 1, p. 128, n. 156. The phrase "to mislead and accuse" renders לאסטאה (*le-asta'ah*), which in the *Zohar* includes both of these meanings.

33. **That Satan on high descends...** In order to wreak havoc in the world, Satan assumes physical form. The image of an ox recalls both the Golden Calf and *the face of an ox* [or: *a bull*] from Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:10). In that vision, each of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne has four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox (or bull) on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back.

According to rabbinic sources, Israel worshiped the Golden Calf as an imitation of the ox in the Divine Chariot-Throne (as described by Ezekiel). See *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 21: "The blessed Holy One said to him [Moses], '... I see them coming to Sinai and receiving My Torah, and I descend on Sinai in My chariot of four animals, on which they gaze—and they unhitch one of them, and thus arouse My anger!' As is said: *the face of an ox* [or: *a bull*] *on the left*... (Ezekiel 1:10), and it is written: *They exchanged their glory for the image of an ox* [or: *a bull*] (Psalms 106:20)."

Here Rabbi Ḥiyya associates the ox with Satan, who originates from *the left*. The ox (or specifically the Golden Calf) is Satan's vehicle for invading the world. The dangerous aspect of the ox also derives from M *Bava Qamma* 1:1, which lists four classifications of damage: "The four primary causes of damage are the ox, the pit, the crop-destroying beast, and the outbreak of fire." See *Zohar* 2:191a; above, pp. 137–38, n. 259. Cf. p. 70, n. 48.

According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, when Balak, king of Moab, mentioned *the ox*, his use of the definite article alluded to "*the* well-known ox," namely Satan.

34. ***The grass of the field*—human spirits…** Who sprout from *Shekhinah*, the divine field. On *Shekhinah* as a field or apple orchard, see below, p. 459, n. 532.

35. **If so, Balak was wise!** If he knew that Satan materializes in the form of an ox.

36. **The power of that ox begins…** The demonic force intensifies in the spring month of Nisan and the autumn month of Tishrei. Cf. below, p. 384, n. 291.

According to M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, "At four periods in the year, the world is judged. At Passover, concerning the harvest.… On Rosh Hashanah, all who come into the world pass before Him in single file." In other words, at Passover (in the middle of Nisan), as the crops begin to ripen, God determines whether the harvest will be rich or not. On Rosh Hashanah (at the beginning of Tishrei), God judges the world and determines the fate of "the spirits of human beings." Here "the harvest" alludes to these human spirits, which were identified above as *the grass of the field*.

At these critical times, the ox displays its harshness. The association of the ox with both Nisan and Satan appears in a Talmudic passage. See BT *Berakhot* 33a: "It was taught in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: 'If an ox's head is in a [fodder] basket, climb up to the roof and throw away the ladder from under you.' Shemu'el said, 'This applies only to a black ox and in the month of Nisan, because then Satan is dancing between his horns.'" See BT *Pesaḥim* 112b; *Zohar* 2:240b.

1. **Rabbi Yitsḥak and Rabbi Yehudah were traveling…** Here begins *Yanuqa* (The Child), a story about the rabbis' encounter with a surprising little boy.

The term ינוקא (*yanuqa*)—technically *yanoqa*—means "suckling, infant, child, young man." These same two rabbis encounter another wonder-child in *Zohar* 1:238b–240b. See also *Zohar* 1:70a–b, 92b, 148a–150b; 2:6b, 169b–170a; 3:39a–41a, 162a, 171a–b; below, pp. 322–33; *ZḤ* 9a–d (*MhN*), 14c–15a (*MhN*), 48a, 49a–b, 77d–78a (*MhN, Rut*), 80d–81a (*MhN, Rut*), 84b–c (*MhN, Rut*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden* 288–91 (136–37); above, p. 129, n. 227; Benarroch, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 258–329.

This section has only a tenuous connection with *Parashat Balaq*. See below at notes 95–107. In the Cremona edition, it constitutes *Parashat Devarim*, apparently because of several verses from that *parashah* that are briefly discussed (see below at notes 50–56). On this section, see above, page xi; Oron, "Motiv ha-Yanuqa"; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa"; idem, "Sava ve-Yanuqa."

On the Christological elements in the portrayal of the child throughout this section, see Liebes, "Myth vs. Symbol," p. 236, n. 32; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 89, 109–10; idem, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 217–57; idem, "God and His Son." On the motif of the wonder-child in contemporary Castilian culture, see Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 155–56.

Sikhnin is the name of a town in Galilee. Several rabbinic scholars are mentioned as either residents of, or visitors to, Sikhnin. One early follower of Jesus is identified in rabbinic literature as Ya'akov of the Village of Sikhnin (or Sekhanya). See *Tosefta Ḥullin* 2:24; BT *Avodah Zarah* 17a, 27b (and parallels); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:8; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 41–62. The place-name also appears in *Zohar* 2:19a; *ZḤ* 75d, 77b (both *MhN, Rut*).

2. **Whoever does not recite *Shema*…** The proper time to recite the morning *Shema* is from the first traces of dawn

until three hours after sunrise. (See M *Berakhot* 1:2.) In rabbinic law, a ban (*niddui*) involves isolation from, and enforced contempt by, the community at large. Various offenses are punishable by a ban, but failure to recite *Shema* is not specified as one of them. Cf. below, note 6; and see BT *Berakhot* 26a (and parallels): "*The crooked cannot be straightened* (Ecclesiastes 1:15)—this refers to one who neglects the recitation of *Shema* in the evening or in the morning."

3. **we were busy with a bride and groom…** Therefore they were exempt from the obligation to recite the *Shema*.

Cf. BT *Sukkah* 25b–26a: "Our Rabbis have taught: 'The bridegroom, the best men, and all the wedding guests are exempt from the obligations of prayer [i.e., the *Amidah*] and tefillin, but are required to recite the *Shema*.'… It has been taught: Ḥananya son of Akavya said, 'Scribes and their vendors and the vendors' vendors and all who are engaged in the work of heaven, including those who sell purple dye [for tzitzit], are exempt from reciting *Shema* and *Amidah* and from donning tefillin and from all the *mitsvot* stated in the Torah. This fulfills the words of Rabbi Yose the Galilean, who said, 'One who is occupied with a *mitsvah* is exempt from another *mitsvah*.'"

See *Tosefta Berakhot* 1:3: "Grooms and all who are engaged in *mitsvot* are exempt from the obligation to recite the *Shema* and the prayer [i.e., the *Amidah*], as is said: *when you are sitting in your house* (Deuteronomy 6:7)—excluding those who are engaged in *mitsvot*. *And when you are walking on the way* (ibid.)—excluding grooms." Cf. JT *Berakhot* 1:3, 3b; BT *Berakhot* 11a, 16a; *Sukkah* 25a; *Sotah* 44b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 4, 41.

4. **By the smell of your clothes…** Cf. the statement by another child in *ZḤ* 48a: "Every person who recites *Shema* properly, every single word [of the 248 words of *Shema*] emanates to one of his [248] limbs. But if a person

does not recite *Shema* in the daytime and at night, every one of his limbs is filled with an evil spirit and with all kinds of evil disease."

Later in this story (below at note 61), the child makes another discovery by his sense of smell. Cf. *ZḤ* 90c–d (*MhN*, *Rut*). The child may also be alluding to the notion of a spiritual garment woven out of the good deeds that a person performs during his lifetime. See above, p. 102, n. 151.

5. **he blessed before washing** Rabbi Yehudah recited the blessing for washing the hands before washing them. This accords with a rabbinic tradition that blessings are normally recited before fulfilling a *mitsvah*. Medieval authorities differed, however, regarding the ritual washing of hands before eating; some indicated that the blessing should be recited before washing, whereas others ruled that it should be recited after washing, since one's hands might be dirty.

See Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1:50; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Berakhot* 11:3; *Tosafot, Pesaḥim* 7b, s.v. *al ha-tevilah*; Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 136; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 158; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 158:11; idem, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 158:11.

6. **If you are disciples of Rabbi Shema'yah the Pious...** Namely Rabbi Shim'on, who is often addressed as *Ḥasida* (Pious) in the section *Rav Metivta* (above, pp. 54–151). On the interchange of the names Shema'yah and Shim'on, cf. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, 3:774, n. 5.

On the child's extreme conclusion, cf. BT *Sotah* 4b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Whoever treats the washing of hands with contempt is uprooted from the world." Cf. BT *Shabbat* 62b. See also BT *Berakhot* 53b, in the name of Rabbi Zuhamai: "Just as a filthy [person or animal] is unfit

for the Temple service, so filthy hands are unfit for blessing [after eating].” Cf. *Zohar* 1:10b, 184b.

According to BT *Berakhot* 19a, one who treats the washing of hands with contempt is placed under a ban. (Cf. M *Eduyyot* 5:6.) The child transfers such a ban to one who fails to recite *Shema*. See above, note 2; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 12.

Whereas in the New Testament, Jesus belittles the importance of washing the hands before eating, the child exaggerates its importance. See Matthew 15:1–20; Mark 7:1–23; Luke 11:37–41; Benarroch, “Sava ve-Yanuqa,” 226.

7. ***When they come into the Tent of Meeting…*** This verse pertains to Aaron and his sons; here the child applies it to anyone who prepares to eat at the table (which takes the place of the altar). See BT *Berakhot* 55a, in the names of Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi El’azar: “As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel; now a person’s table atones for him.”

The concluding sentence implies that the ten fingers of the human hand symbolize the ten *sefirot*. See Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 27; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 12.

On the sefirotic symbolism of the fingers, see also *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:3: “Ten *sefirot belimah*—equivalent to the ten fingers, five opposite five.” See *Midrash Tadshe* 10 (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:174); *Bahir* 87 (124), 94 (138); Naḥmanides on Exodus 17:12; 30:19; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod*, 29b–c; idem, *Sha’ar ha-Razim*, 57; *Zohar* 1:20b–21a; 2:57a, 67a, 75b–77a, 178a, 208a; 3:143a (*IR*), 145a (*Piq*), 146b, 195b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 254. On the phrase “inhabit the height of the world,” see BT *Berakhot* 6b; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 28; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 12.

8. **There is a certain finger…** The middle finger, which (according to the child) Moses raised when he held

up his hand(s) to defeat the Amalekites. See Exodus 17:11–13.

The middle finger corresponds to the middle crossbar of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle). The frame of the Dwelling (constructed with boards) extended along the northern, southern, and western walls, whereas the eastern side (which served as the entrance) had no frame and was closed by a screen. Along the frame of each of the three sides ran five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. The central bar ran across the entire length of the side; above it were two bars of half this length, matched by two similar bars below it.

The five bars symbolize the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, with *Tif'eret* as *the central bar… running from end to end* (that is, from *Binah* above to *Shekhinah* below). The phrase "two on this side, two on that side" refers to *Ḥesed* and *Netsaḥ* on the right, and *Gevurah* and *Hod* on the left. *Tif'eret, in the middle*, is the rung attained by both Jacob and Moses.

In Greek and Roman culture, the middle finger represented the phallus, and raising it was seen as a degrading, intimidating, or threatening gesture. In Latin, this finger was known as *digitus impudicus* (the indecent finger). Raising this finger was also one method of overcoming the evil eye (whose threatening aspect soon figures in this story). Here, the child is apparently combining the lofty sefirotic symbolism of the middle finger with its popular and vulgar association. Moses, as it were, was "giving the finger" to the Amalekites. See Morris et al., *Gestures*, 81–82; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 15; idem, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 226–27. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 55b; *Zohar* 2:76b.

On Moses raising his hands (and fingers) against Amalek, see *Bahir* 94 (138); *Zohar* 2:66a. The opinion that *the central bar* was "one of those five" matches the description in *Baraita di-Mlekhet ha-Mishkan* 1 and Rashi on Exodus 26:26. According to *Bemidbar Rabbah* 6:4 and

Rashbam on Exodus 26:26, *the central bar* was an additional one. See Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 26:26, n. 83. On the sefirotic symbolism of *the central bar*, see *Zohar* 1:1b, 148b (*ST*), 224a; 2:51b, 175b–176a, 233b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 7; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 41–42 (49–51).

The context in Exodus (26:26–28) reads: *You shall make bars* [or: *crossbars*] *of acacia wood, five for the boards of the one side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the boards of the second* [or: *other*] *side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the side of the Dwelling at the rear to the west; and the central bar in the middle of the boards, running from end to end*.

9. **by which the others are sustained** The middle finger symbolizes *Tif'eret*, through whom the other lower *sefirot* are sustained.

10. **'five hundred years'…** The five *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Hod* within the sefirotic Tree of Life are pictured as five hundred years, which is how long it would take to traverse, or climb, this Tree. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:6, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Ila'i: "The Tree of Life extends over a journey of five hundred years, and all the waters of Creation branch off beneath it."

Yesod, the divine phallus, is associated with the covenant of circumcision and known as "the Holy Covenant." The child indicates that *Yesod* is aroused by the five sefirotic fingers (*Ḥesed* through *Hod*). The erotic tone is heightened by his concluding sentence. The same statement ("It is a concealed matter") appears in *Zohar* 1:66b, referring there to an erection of the divine phallus.

See *Haggahot Maharḥu; Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Instead of the provocative verb אתער (*it'ar*), "is aroused," V20 and *Or Yaqar* read more blandly אתגזר (*itgezar*), "is circumcised."

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 2:9; *Zohar* 1:18a, 35a, 76b (*ST*), 78b

(*ST*); 2:2a, 145b; 3:217b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69).

11. **all blessings of the priest…** When the priest raises his hands to bless the people, his ten fingers stimulate the ten *sefirot* and convey divine blessing. Similarly, when Moses raised his hand in the battle against the Amalekites, he strengthened God's hand and drew down divine power to defeat the enemy. Since human fingers symbolize divine potencies, they must be clean when one recites the blessing over washing the hands.

Traditionally, before reciting Grace after Meals, one washes off the remnants of food from his fingers. According to Kabbalah, the dirty "fingerbowl water" is offered to the demonic Other Side, thereby nourishing and appeasing him.

On the concluding clause, see BT *Ḥullin* 105a (in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak son of Ashyan): "The first water [i.e., washing the hands before the meal] is מצוה (*mitsvah*), a meritorious act; and the last [water, i.e., washing after the meal] is חובה (*ḥovah*), an obligation." Here, the child plays with Hebrew *ḥovah*, "obligation," and Aramaic חובא (*ḥova*), "sin," alluding to the sinful Other Side, who is offered the fingerbowl water.

On the "last water" (or fingerbowl water), see also BT *Berakhot* 53b, *Eruvin* 17b, *Ḥullin* 105b–106a; *Zohar* 2:154b, 169a, 265a (*Heikh*), 266b (*Heikh*); 3:246a (*RM*), 272b (*RM*), 273b (*RM*); *ZḤ* 87b–c (*MhN, Rut*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:199. Cf. *Zohar* 1:10b. On fingerbowl water being compulsory, see Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 62, 80–87.

On the theme of assuaging demonic powers, see below, p. 436, n. 456. On the wording "Moses' hand" (in the singular), see Exodus 17:11; Vol. 4, p. 362, n. 572. On the linking of the priestly blessing with Moses' action, see Naḥmanides on Exodus 17:12. On Rabbi Shema'yah, see above, note 6.

12. **what is your father's name?** In a parallel story in *Zohar* 1:6a, Rabbi Abba and Rabbi El'azar ask an anonymous donkey-driver to tell them his father's name. See below, notes 28, 48.

13. **he drives the donkeys behind them…** His departed soul reappears on earth in the guise of a humble donkey-driver in order to serve traveling holy men. In the *Zohar*, the Companions often encounter such wandering donkey-drivers.

The formulations "drives the donkeys" and "a donkey-driver" both render the term טיעא (*tayya'a*), "Arab," Arab caravaner, derived from the name of the Arabian tribe *Ṭayyi'*. See *Zohar* 1:5b (part of a parallel story); 2:45b, 94b–95a, 145b, 155b–157a; 3:21a–23a, 306a (*Tosefet*); *ZḤ* 83a–d (*MhN*, *Rut*); *TZ* 23, 69a. Cf. the story in BT *Ḥagigah* 14b (and parallels); *Bereshit Rabbah* 32:10; BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 25a–b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:3.

On *tayya'a*, see also BT *Berakhot* 56b, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 26b, *Yevamot* 120b, *Bava Batra* 73b–74a, *Sanhedrin* 110a, *Ḥullin* 7a; *Tanḥuma, Qoraḥ* 11 (and parallels); Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, 248–54; Pushinski, "Le-Ḥeqer Sefat ha-Zohar"; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 46; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 76–79; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 77, n. 604 (and his reference to the expression "a donkey carrying books"); idem, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 159–61. The prophet Elijah returns to earth as a *tayya'a* in BT *Berakhot* 6b (printed version), and as an ערבי (*aravi*), "Arab" in *Rut Zuta* 1:20; 4:11.

The verb "to goad" renders טעין (*ta'ein*), based on Arabic *ta'ana*, "to pierce, goad." See *Targum Yonatan*, Jeremiah 37:10; David Kimḥi on Genesis 45:17; idem, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, s.v. *t'n*; *Zohar* 1:6a, 7a; 2:95a; 3:201a, 221b; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 42; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227.

14. **this child is not human!** See BT *Shabbat* 112b, where Rabbi Ḥizkiyah is astounded by the brilliance of his student Rabbi Yoḥanan and says, “This is not a human being!” Cf. BT *Niddah* 13a.

Here the remark has other connotations also, as will be seen. On the supernatural and mythical quality of the child, see Liebes, “Myth vs. Symbol,” 219–23; Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 18.

15. **Come, let us bless** Literally, “Give [the cup of wine], and we will bless [i.e., recite Grace after Meals].” On this formula, see BT *Pesaḥim* 103a–b; Katz, *Halakah ve-Qabbalah*, 37–38; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 28, 119, n. 42. See also Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 19.

16. **an invitation** The term הזמנה (*hazmanah*) means “invitation, summons, expressing an intention.”

17. **Whenever a person sits at the table…** Both *Shekhinah* and the demonic Other Side appear at one’s table. If, after eating, the person utters the proper invitation to bless God for the food, then the Other Side is overcome and *Shekhinah* is arrayed in blessings, facing Her spouse (*Tif’eret*) above. Conversely, if one fails to utter the proper invitation, then the Other Side benefits from the blessing.

18. **Why is there no invitation for other blessings?…** Why only for Grace after Meals? The child explains that when one holds an edible object such as a piece of fruit, intending to recite a blessing before eating it, the food itself represents an invitation.

According to Leviticus, for the first three years of a tree’s growth, its fruit may not be eaten. The child indicates that until those three years have passed (“before this”), the fruit belongs to the Other Side; reciting a blessing would benefit the demonic force.

Cf. *Zohar* 3:87a–b; Vol. 8, p. 50, n. 140. The context in Leviticus (19:23–25) reads: *When you come to the land and plant any fruit-bearing tree, you shall treat its foreskin with its fruit as foreskin* [or: *you shall leave its fruit*

uncircumcised]. *Three years it shall be foreskin* [or: *uncircumcised; forbidden*] *to you; it shall not be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit shall be sacred, a jubilation before* YHVH. *In the fifth year you may eat of its fruit, that its yield may be increased for you. I am* YHVH *your God*.

On the question of whether the fruit of a tree can be eaten in the fourth year or not until the fifth, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1680–82. In the passage in Leviticus the term ערלה (*orlah*), "foreskin," refers to the fruit enclosed in its bud; the closed bud is to be plucked before its fruit emerges, leaving the fruit "uncircumcised." See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1678–80. In the *Zohar*, foreskin often pertains to the demonic realm.

19. **So, too, with Grace after Meals…** Why shouldn't the cup of blessing (over which one recites Grace after Meals) be itself considered an adequate invitation (like holding a piece of fruit before reciting a blessing)? Why does one need to utter the formula "Come, let us bless"? The child explains that when, during the meal, the person drank wine, that cup already served as an invitation to the blessing recited before drinking: "… who creates the fruit of the vine." So now for Grace after Meals, a fresh invitation is required, since *this* cup of blessing is intended for (and symbolizes) *Shekhinah*.

On the cup of blessing as symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:1a, 156a (*ST*), 233b, 240a, 250a–b; 2:104a, 138b, 143b, 157b, 168b, 189b; 3:39b, 245a–b (*RM*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 105; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 383.

20. **Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten…** This formula (which traditionally follows "Come, let us bless") seems to be an adequate invitation, since the others at the table immediately respond with "Blessed is He of whose bounty we have eaten," which already constitutes (part of) the blessing (of Grace after Meals). So the opening words ("Come, let us bless") seem superfluous.

The child explains that the first invitation (“Come, let us bless”) is directed toward “the cup of blessing, undefined”—that is, not only the physical vessel but the divine cup of blessing, *Shekhinah*. Then by grasping this cup (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) and saying “Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten,” one invites *Binah*, “the upper world,” from whom issue all blessing and sustenance.

Being concealed, *Binah* cannot be addressed directly; so this second formula is worded in the third person (“Let us bless Him…”), rather than in the second person (“Let us bless You…”). In grammatical terminology, the third-person construction is known as נסתר (*nistar*), “concealed.” See *Zohar* 2:168b (Vol. 5, p. 478, n. 820).

On the relation between the formulas “Come, let us bless,” and “Let us bless Him…,” see Katz, *Halakah ve-Qabbalah*, 37–38. Cf. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 119, n. 42.

21. **since days of old…** מן יומא דעלמא (*Min yoma de-alma*), literally “since the day of eternity” (or “… of the world”). See *Zohar* 2:188a; below, p. 419, n. 402. Cf. *Targum Onqelos*, Deuteronomy 32:7. On the concluding sentence, see above, note 14.

22. ***You shall make the bars…*** The rabbis point out that this passage includes three sets of *five bars* whereas “there are only two (five-fingered) hands.”

The context in Exodus (26:26–28) reads: *You shall make bars* [or: *crossbars*] *of acacia wood, five for the boards of the one side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the boards of the second* [or: *other*] *side of the Dwelling, and five bars for the side of the Dwelling at the rear to the west; and the central bar in the middle of the boards, running from end to end*. See above, note 8.

23. **From a person’s mouth you hear who he is…** Cf. the medieval saying quoted by Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera, *Sefer ha-Mvaqqesh*, 71: “A person’s entire intellect is in his words.”

See below, p. 364 at n. 232. Cf. BT *Me'ilah* 17b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:7 (on 1:1), quoting Proverbs 16:23.

24. ***The wise one has his eyes in his head…*** This is too obvious to be mentioned by the author of Ecclesiastes (traditionally identified as King Solomon). However, the child reads the verse as follows: *The wise one has his eyes* בראשו (*be-rosho*), *on his head*—that is, focused on *Shekhinah*, who rests upon his head. To keep that divine light kindled, *the wise one* supplies oil constantly, namely the oil of good deeds.

On the child's opening rhetorical questions, cf. *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:14: "*The wise one has his eyes be-rosho, in his head*—and does the fool have his eyes in his feet? However, while the wise one is still *be-rosho, at the beginning*, of an enterprise, he knows how it will conclude." See below, p. 299, n. 8.

Originally, not walking with one's head uncovered was considered a sign of exceptional piety, though it eventually developed into standard traditional practice. See BT *Qiddushin* 31a: "Rav Huna son of Rabbi Yehoshu'a would not walk four cubits with his head uncovered. He said, '*Shekhinah* is above my head!'" Cf. *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot), par. 53: "A person should not walk… with his head uncovered because *Shekhinah* is above his head." See also BT *Shabbat* 118b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot* 5:6; idem, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:52; *Zohar* 3:122b (*RM*), 245b (*RM*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 224.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes 9 reads: *At all times let your garments be white, and let oil on your head not be lacking*. See *Qohelet Rabbah*, ad loc.: *"At all times let your garments be white*—from sins. *And let oil on your head not be lacking*—from *mitsvot* and good deeds." Cf. BT *Shabbat* 153a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 29; *Zohar* 2:155a.

The image of the body as a wick, and *mitsvot* and good deeds as oil, reappears in Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 57 (70), where the verse in Ecclesiastes 9 is also

quoted. According to the poet and philosopher Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi (*Beḥinat Olam*, 16), the human body is a wick and the soul oil. Cf. *Zohar* 1:50b–51a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 180.

The image of a "light kindled on his head" appears in a rabbinic description of the spirit of a fetus and in a midrashic description of the Babylonian *amora* Mar Ukba. For the former, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3 (quoting Job 29:3); *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153); *Ḥibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 254. For the latter, see Rashi on BT *Sanhedrin* 31b, s.v. *li-dziv leih*; *Tosafot, Shabbat* 56b, s.v. *de-tsutsita*.

25. **How could you fail to notice this?...** The passage in Exodus specifies *one side* and *the second side* but not *the third* or *the fourth*. The child explains that *one* and *second* allude to the right and left sides of the *sefirot*, namely *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*. For the biblical passage, see above, notes 8, 22.

26. **kissed him as before...** In the extant manuscripts and printed versions, there is no earlier reference to the rabbis kissing the child, so some later printed editions delete "as before." On the wisdom of children in Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see *Zohar* 1:92b; 3:171a, 206a.

27. **worthy woman, selected from among all women...** Cf. Luke 1:42, recording the exclamation of Elizabeth (pregnant with John the Baptist) to Mary (pregnant with Jesus): "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

28. **I'm not afraid of this...** The child has no fear of the evil eye because he is "the son of a great and precious fish," and fish are immune to the evil eye. The meaning of his being "the son of a... fish" is clarified below (see note 48).

The quotation from Genesis is part of Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh). The context (Genesis 48:15–16) reads: *He blessed Joseph and said, "The God in whose presence my fathers walked, Abraham and*

Isaac, the God who has tended me since I came to be until this day, the angel [or: *the messenger*] *redeeming me from all evil—may He bless the lads. Let my name be called in them and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac;* לרב וידגו (*ve-yidgu la-rov*), *let them teem multitudinous* [or: *let them teem like fish multitudinously*], *in the midst of the earth*"

The child associates the verb ידגו (*yidgu*), *let them teem*, with דג (*dag*), "fish." The adverb לרב (*la-rov*), *multitudinously*, seems superfluous, but it implies "overwhelming the evil eye."

See BT *Berakhot* 20a: "Rabbi Yoḥanan used to go and sit at the gates of the bathhouse. He said, 'When the daughters of Israel come out from bathing, they will look at me, and they will have children as beautiful as I.' The rabbis said to him, 'Aren't you afraid of the evil eye?' He replied, 'I am descended from Joseph, who was immune to the evil eye….' Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina said, '[We know this] from here: וידגו לרב (*ve-yidgu la-rov*), *Let them teem like fish multitudinously, in the midst of the earth* (Genesis 48:16). Just as fish of the sea are covered by water and are immune to the evil eye, so the descendants of Joseph are immune to the evil eye.'"

On this passage in *Berakhot*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97 (p. 1224), 97:3; BT *Berakhot* 55b, *Sotah* 36b, *Bava Metsi'a* 84a, *Bava Batra* 118b; *Zohar* 3:129b (*IR*), 202b. The fish, of course, is a widespread symbol of Christ, beginning in the second century, and carries messianic overtones also in Judaism. See Stroumsa, "The Early Christian Fish Symbol Reconsidered."

29. ***In the midst of the earth…*** Even on earth, the fish-like descendants of Joseph will have no fear of the evil eye.

30. **from the side of the evil eye…** From the demonic realm.

31. ***The angel redeeming me…*** Note that the rabbis have just called the child "Angel of *YHVH*." For the biblical

context, see above, note 28. According to the child, Jacob calls *Shekhinah* המלאך (*ha-mal'akh*), *the angel* [or: *the messenger*], because She is being sent from above by *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* (Father and Mother) to care for Her household, which includes the other angels and the world below.

The phrase "the supernal speculum" refers to *Tif'eret*, who conveys the flow of emanation from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* to *Shekhinah*. See below, pp. 399–400, n. 345. On the child's interpretation of the verse in Genesis, cf. Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 22b. See also *Zohar* 1:230a. On *Shekhinah* as "angel," see also Vol. 5, p. 171, n. 89.

32. **but rather by the name *YHVH*...** This name is normally pronounced אדני (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which designates *Shekhinah*.

The "two cherubim" are two angels beneath *Shekhinah*, who convey blessing below. Some commentators identify these as Metatron and Sandalfon. See *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*.

33. **When She first appeared to Moses...** At the Burning Bush. See Exodus 3:2: *The angel of YHVH appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush; and he saw, and look, the bush was burning with fire and the bush was not consumed*.

Whereas Moses encountered *Shekhinah* directly as *the angel of YHVH*, Jacob encountered Her only indirectly through Rachel, who symbolized *Shekhinah*—the Divine Rachel, *weeping for her children*. The full verse in Genesis reads: *He* [namely Jacob] *was still speaking with them* [namely the shepherds] *when Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess*. According to the child, in this verse *Rachel* is "unspecified" (that is, she is not identified as "Rachel, daughter of Laban"), and this nonspecific wording includes the Divine Rachel, who is symbolized by the human Rachel. Rachel's *sheep* symbolize

the angels guided by *Shekhinah*, while *her father* represents the Divine Father, *Ḥokhmah*.

The word "symbol" renders דוגמא (*dugma*), "paradigm, example, model" and in the *Zohar* also "symbol." See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 38.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Thus says YHVH: A voice is heard* ברמה (*be-ramah*), *in Ramah* [or: *on a height*]*—wailing, bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more* [or: *they are not*]. On *Rachel* in this verse as signifying *Shekhinah*, see *ZḤ* 92a–b (*MhN, Eikhah*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 66 (83).

34. **Abraham is more praiseworthy...** One might assume that Abraham was greater than Moses, since Moses' first theophany was through *the angel of YHVH* (namely *Shekhinah*), whereas Abraham encountered *YHVH* (namely *Tif'eret*) directly. The child indicates, however, that Abraham actually encountered *Shekhinah*, who is known as אדני (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which is how the name יהוה (*YHVH*) is normally pronounced. This particular revelation was fitting, since Abraham had just "received the covenant" of circumcision and was thereby joined to *Shekhinah*.

On the notion that Abraham encountered *Adonai* (rather than *YHVH*), cf. Genesis 18:3: *He said, "Adonai, My Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes, please do not go on past your servant."* See also Exodus 6:3: *I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by My name YHVH I was not known to them*. Genesis 18:1 reads in full: *YHVH appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he was sitting at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day*.

35. **But Moses was undivided...** His lifelong state of uninterrupted communion with God is indicated by a peculiar Masoretic phenomenon. One of the Masoretic signs is known as פסק (*paseq*), literally "cutting off, interposition," consisting of a vertical line (|) between two words. One of the functions of this pausal sign is to separate a pair of

identical words or names in the biblical text, such as אברהם | אברהם (*Avraham Avraham*), *Abraham! Abraham!* (Genesis 22:11) or יעקב | יעקב (*Ya'aqov Ya'aqov*), *Jacob! Jacob!* (Genesis 46:2) or שמואל | שמואל (*Shemu'el Shemu'el*), *Samuel! Samuel!* (1 Samuel 3:10). Uniquely, however, when God calls to Moses out of the Burning Bush, the exclamation משה משה (*Mosheh Mosheh*), *Moses! Moses!* contains no pausal sign.

Just as Abraham was about to slaughter his son Isaac, an angel stopped him, exclaiming *Abraham! Abraham!* From a kabbalistic perspective, until this moment Abraham was inclined too far toward *Ḥesed*, but now by nearly sacrificing his son, he succeeded in balancing *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, thereby becoming complete and whole. The pausal sign between the two instances of his name indicates the difference between his earlier and later states.

As for Moses, however, from the moment he was born, he was illumined by *Tif'eret* ("the resplendent speculum"). The child juxtaposes the two verses from Genesis and Exodus in order to demonstrate that when Moses' mother *saw that he was good*, this "goodness" implies divine light, as in the verse *God saw the light, that it was good*. Right from birth, Moses was joined to his brilliant sefirotic rung (*Tif'eret*), and his constant state of communion is signified by the lack of the pausal sign between the two instances of his name. *Shekhinah*, who was destined to become Moses' divine wife, "diminished Herself" toward Moses, revealing Herself as *the angel of YHVH*, rather than by Her proper name, *Adonai*.

See *Shemot Rabbah* 2:6: "But *Moses! Moses!*—there is no פסק (*paseq*), pausal sign. Why?... With all the other prophets, He broke off speaking with them, whereas throughout Moses' life He never הפסיק (*hiphsiq*), broke off."

See *Zohar* 1:120a–b, 158b; 3:138a (*IR*), 289b (*IZ*); *Minḥat Shai* on Exodus 3:4. Cf. *Sifra, Nedavah* 1:10, 12, 3c–d; *Tosefta Berakhot* 1:14; *Bereshit Rabbah* 30:4; 38:12; 56:7; *Rut Rabbah* (ed. Lerner) 8:4; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 8, pp. 143, 154; *Midrash Shemu'el* 9:8; *Tanḥuma, Shemot*

18; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 15; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:21; *Zohar* 1:59b–60a (*Tos*). Cf. also *Zohar* 2:93b. On the pausal sign *paseq*, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §15f, n. 2; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 13:640–41.

On the sefirotic significance of the binding of Isaac, see especially *Zohar* 1:119b–120a. On the association between *She saw that he was good* and *God saw the light, that it was good*, see BT *Sotah* 12a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:20; *Zohar* 2:11b; 3:83a (*RM*). On *the light* (in Genesis 1) as alluding to *Tif'eret*, see *Zohar* 1:16b. On Moses' constant state of illumination, see *Zohar* 3:106b (Vol. 8, p. 198, n. 420). Cf. above, p. 154, n. 8. On the image of "the resplendent speculum," see below, pp. 399–400, n. 345.

The full verse in Exodus 3 reads: *YHVH saw that he had turned aside to see, and God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses! Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."* The full verse in Exodus 2 reads: *The woman conceived and bore a son, and she saw that he was good and she hid him three months*.

36. **Jacob called Her *angel*...** As he was about to die, Jacob attained the rung of *Tif'eret* and possessed *Shekhinah*, becoming Her husband as (or immediately after) he died. So he called Her *angel* (Genesis 48:16)—the same name by which She was called when Moses encountered Her at the Burning Bush. But whereas Jacob was wedded to *Shekhinah* only upon his death ("in spirit"), Moses became Her husband during the prime of his life ("in body").

On the contrast between Jacob and Moses, see *Zohar* 1:21b–22a, 236b; Liebes, "Myth vs. Symbol," 213–19. On Moses' becoming "the husband of *Shekhinah*" in his lifetime, see Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128. Genesis 48:16 reads: *The angel redeeming me from all evil—may He bless the lads*. See above, notes 28, 31.

37. ***May He bless the lads...*** As Jacob was preparing to move "into a new house," that is, to marry *Shekhinah*, he

prayed that Her two cherubim (*lads*) would be blessed.

In the wording הנערים (*ha-ne'arim*), *the lads*, the child focuses on the definite article *ha-* (*the*), which implies "the well-known ones."

On the cherubim, see above, note 32. On the identification of the cherubim as *the lads*, see *Zohar* 1:228b–229a. Cf. BT *Sukkah* 5b: "What is כרוב (*keruv*), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'כרביא (*Ke-ravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רביא (*ravya*).'"

On the childlike cherubim, see also *Zohar* 1:1b, 18b, 172a; 2:176a, 278a; 3:60b, 217b, 274a; *ZḤ* 86a (*MhN, Rut*). The plump childlike angels of Christian art conceivably derive from the Talmudic tradition but more likely from the Greco-Roman *Erotes*, "loves," winged boys in the company of Aphrodite.

38. ***Let my name be called in them…*** Jacob refers to his own name because now he has attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, the trunk of the divine body, who cleaves to *Shekhinah* (pictured as the "house") and embraces Her with His right and left arms (*Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*). These two arms are symbolized by Abraham and Isaac, mentioned in the continuation of the verse: *Let my name be called in them and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac*.

39. ***let them teem like fish…*** The cherubim come from the Sea of *Shekhinah*, yet they thrive on land so that they can nourish inhabitants of the earth.

40. ***He blessed Joseph…*** This verse, preceding the blessing of Joseph's two sons, is problematic since Jacob's blessing of Joseph does not appear until the following chapter. The child explains, however, that the blessing of the cherubim (*the lads*) implies (or necessitates) the blessing of Joseph, who symbolizes *Yesod*, through whom all blessing streams to *Shekhinah* and Her cherubim. *Yesod* represents the divine phallus, which is fittingly concealed; so Joseph's blessing appears only later and his name is not mentioned in the continuation of the verse here—rather *the*

name of my fathers, that is Abraham and Isaac, in order "to cover him." The patriarchal triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* conveys the blessing to *Yesod*, who secretly unites with *Shekhinah*, transmitting the flow of blessing to Her and, through Her, to the cherubim. Thus the cherubim are blessed "from the patriarchs."

The wording here—"since he blessed these *lads*, he blessed Joseph"—matches the formulation of David Kimḥi (on Genesis 48:15): "When he blessed his sons, look (i.e., you cannot deny that, it is as if) he blessed him!" Cf. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:5; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 48:15; Rashbam and Naḥmanides on Genesis 48:15; *Zohar* 1:227b. Instead of *He blessed Joseph*, the Septuagint reads more logically *He blessed them*, which is also reflected in the Syriac translation and the Vulgate. The verse in Genesis 49 reads: *A fruitful son is Joseph, a fruitful son by a spring*.

41. **Come, let us bless** Literally, "Give [the cup of wine], and we will bless [i.e., recite Grace after Meals]." See above, note 15.

42. ***He who has a generous eye will bless…*** The verse reads: *He who has a good* [or: *generous*] *eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. The child is playing with a Talmudic interpretation of this verse. See BT *Sotah* 38b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "We give the cup of blessing for the recital of Grace after Meals only to one who has a generous eye, as is said: *He who has a generous eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. Do not read *yevorakh, will be blessed*, but rather יְבָרֵךְ (*yevarekh*), *will bless*."

See *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 129; *Tanḥuma, Vezot Haberakhah* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vezot Haberakhah* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:15; *Zohar* 2:218a–b; 3:63b, 117b, 129b–130a (*IR*), 145a (*Piq*), 147b, 211b, 289a (*IZ*).

43. **Beloved son of the blessed Holy One…** Or, “Son, beloved of the blessed Holy One.”

On the Christological elements in this entire section, see above, note 1. The tradition quoted by the child appears in BT *Berakhot* 46a, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai.

44. **I’m not master of the house…** This may mean: “I don’t consider myself the master of the house, nor you as guests; rather, we are all equal.” Or, the child may be implying that his mother is the mistress of the house and that the rabbis are *her* guests, not his. See *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For another interpretation, see Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 99.

45. **He took the cup of blessing…** That is, the cup of wine over which Grace after Meals is recited.

The phrase “for the land and for the food” is the conclusion of the second blessing of Grace after Meals. On the association of the verse from Psalms with “the cup of blessing,” see BT *Berakhot* 51b, *Pesaḥim* 119b; *Zohar* 1:1a, 250a; 2:169a; 3:245a–b (*RM*).

On the cup’s “settling in his right hand,” see BT *Berakhot* 51a, “One takes [the cup] with both his hands and places it in the right hand.” See Vol. 5, p. 276, n. 241; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

46. **that life be conveyed to one of these…** Referring to Rabbi Yitsḥak. According to another account in the *Zohar*, when it was decreed that Rabbi Yitsḥak was to die, Rabbi Shim’on interceded with God and saved his life. The blessed Holy One became Rabbi Yitsḥak’s “guarantor,” promising to hand him over to the Angel of Death when his time would come, while Rabbi Shim’on became his “guarantor below,” promising to bring Rabbi Yitsḥak along with him when Rabbi Shim’on’s time would come. See *Zohar* 1:217b–218b; below, p. 325, n. 95; p. 768, n. 5.

47. **Companions, peace to you…** Having communed silently with God, the child conveys a divine greeting to the

two rabbis.

48. **son of Rav Hamnuna Sava!** The child had hinted at this when he said "I'm the son of a great and precious נונא (*nuna*), fish" (above at note 28).

In *Zohar* 1:5a–7b, Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba encounter a donkey-driver who amazes them with his wisdom and then tells them that his father "was *nuna*, a fish." The rabbis conclude that he is the son of Rav Hamnuna Sava, although they eventually realize that he is actually Rav Hamnuna himself. See Vol. 1, pp. 37–38, n. 257; p. 43, n. 300; above, notes 12–13; *Zohar* 2:107b–108a. On Hamnuna and *nuna*, see also *Tosafot, Qiddushin* 25a, s.v. *hamnuna qarnuna*. On Rav Hamnuna and *yanuqa* (a child), see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 25a–b.

Historically, Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) was a Babylonian teacher who lived in the mid-third century. In the Talmud, Rav Hamnuna occasionally transmits teachings of Rabbi Shim'on (e.g., BT *Ḥullin* 21a, *Temurah* 15a), and several prayers are attributed to him (BT *Berakhot* 11b, 17a, 58a). In the *Zohar*, roles are reversed and Rabbi Shim'on cites Rav Hamnuna. Throughout the *Zohar*, Rav Hamnuna is greatly revered, and several original ritual acts are attributed to him; the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava is cited frequently as well. See Vol. 1, pp. 37–38, n. 257; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:60; Cohen, "How Many R. Hamnunas in the Babylonian Talmud?" On Rav Hamnuna's mythical status, see Liebes, "Myth vs. Symbol," 219–23.

49. **This one attains no name in the world...** Rabbi Shim'on predicts that the child will not attain fame, hinting that he will die young. The concluding sentence implies that Rav Hamnuna's soul illumines, or has entered, his son. In a sense, father and son have merged into one.

See below at note 144; *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:205; Liebes, "Myth vs. Symbol," 220–21; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 104–5.

Cf. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 348–49. On the Christological overtones, cf. above, note 1.

50. **locking horns with one another…** Contending with each other over passages of Torah. On the battle of Torah, see below, note 61.

The discussion here revolves around several verses about Israel's enemies. The verse in Deuteronomy states: *Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war*, and a later verse in the same chapter reads similarly: *You will approach opposite the Ammonites; do not attack them and do not provoke them* (Deuteronomy 2:19). According to a rabbinic tradition, these two nations were spared because of two virtuous women who were destined to be born: Ruth the Moabite and Naamah the Ammonite. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David, while Naamah was a wife of King Solomon, the mother of Rehoboam, and thus she too was a matriarch of the Davidic dynasty. Here, the rabbis associate both Ruth and Naamah with Moab.

But if Moab (and Ammon) were spared because of worthy individuals, why was Israel commanded to attack Midian—when, after all, Zipporah and Jethro's whole family issued from Midian and were righteous, and Moses himself was raised in Midian (or rather, lived there for about half of his life)? This seems unfair.

On the reason for sparing Moab and Ammon, see *Bava Qamma* 38a–b; *Zohar* 3:190a.

On the reason for attacking Midian, see Numbers 25 (which describes how the Midianites seduced Israel to commit idolatry). On the tension between Moses' being raised among the Midianites and God's command to attack them, see *Tanḥuma, Mattot* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mattot* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 22:4. On Ruth, see Ruth 1:4; 4:21–22. On Naamah, see 1 Kings 14:21.

The idiomatic phrase "locking horns" renders מתנגחין (*mitnaggeḥin*), "goring, butting, fighting one another." See

Daniel 11:40; *Tanḥuma, Vayiggash* 4; *Zohar* 3:98a (*RM*); below, p. 346 at n. 171.

Deuteronomy 2:9 reads in full: *YHVH said to me, "Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of his land as a possession, for to the sons of Lot I have given Ar as a possession*." Deuteronomy 2:19 reads in full: *You will approach opposite the Ammonites; do not attack them and do not provoke them, for I will not give any of the land of the Ammonites to you as a possession, for to the sons of Lot I have given it as a possession*.

51. **There is no comparison…** Ruth and Naamah had not yet issued (or "been picked") from Moab (and Ammon), whereas Jethro's family had already issued from Midian.

Cf. the rabbinic saying "There is no comparison between someone who has bread in his basket and someone who has no bread in his basket." See, e.g., BT *Yoma* 18b, *Ketubbot* 62b–63b.

52. **Even if he has already picked them…** So, even if Jethro's virtuous family had already issued from Midian, that nation should still have been spared.

53. **tends the fig tree constantly…** See Proverbs 27:18: *He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit*.

54. ***Moab said to the elders of Midian…*** Moab initiated the plan to commission Balaam to curse Israel; yet because of Ruth (and Naamah), who were destined to issue from Moab (and Ammon), Moab was spared. For the context in Numbers, see above, p. 232, n. 1.

55. **Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya, his father-in-law…** According to rabbinic tradition, Rabbi El'azar's father-in-law was named Rabbi Shim'on son of Yose son of Lekonya. The *Zohar* normally switches father and son, transforming Shim'on son of Yose into Yose son of Shim'on. See Vol. 8, p. 27, n. 78; below, p. 307 at n. 36. On the interplay between father and son, see above, note 49. Cf. below, pp. 418–19, n. 402.

56. ***Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war…*** In this chapter from Deuteronomy, Moses is instructed not to attack or provoke either Moab or Ammon. The wording in the two verses is almost identical, but midrashic tradition focuses on a slight distinction: regarding Ammon Scripture states *do not provoke them*, whereas regarding Moab it states *do not provoke them to war*. This implies that "when they showed themselves to the Ammonites, [Israel] appeared cloaked for peace [so not to *provoke them* at all]; whereas to the Moabites they appeared armed," and God even permitted Israel to seize material from Moab, while still not provoking them *to war*.

See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:3; and the sources listed in the following note. For the full verses in Deuteronomy, see above, note 50.

57. **This one was impudent and said, 'מואב (*Mo'av*), *Moab'*…** According to Genesis 19:29–38, Moab and Ammon were both descended from the incestuous union of Lot and his two daughters. The two concluding verses of that passage read: *The elder bore a son and named him* מואב (*Mo'av*), *Moab; he is the father of Moab to this day. The younger also bore a son and named him* בן עמי (*Ben Ammi*), *Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites to this day*.

According to a midrashic tradition, the name *Mo'av* implies that the baby came מאב (*me-av*), "from father." By picking this name, the elder daughter was proclaiming her incestuous conduct impudently. In contrast, the younger daughter disguised her conduct by selecting the name *Ben Ammi, son of my people*. Generations later, Israel acted toward Moab and Ammon fittingly, confronting the former impudently and meeting the latter peacefully.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:11; BT *Nazir* 23b, *Bava Qamma* 38b, *Horayot* 10b–11a; Rashi on Genesis 19:37; Deuteronomy 2:9; *Zohar* 1:110a (*ST*), 110b.

58. **Rabbi El’azar remembered that child…** See above at note 49: “Rabbi El’azar quivered, and said, ‘I must go see that burning lamp!’”

The Persian parasang equals about 3.5 modern miles. According to a rabbinic tradition, one should accompany a distinguished teacher for a distance of three parasangs. Here, Rabbi El’azar and his companions go out of their way for that distance to visit the distinguished child. See BT *Sotah* 46b; Vol. 7, p. 39, n. 119.

59. **planted pillars…** This phrase renders שתילין (*shetilin*), “plants, saplings.” In the *Zohar*, the root שתל (*shtl*) also implies “to stand; to be a foundation or pillar.” The child’s playful use of this root to describe the virtuous rabbis may be influenced by a saying attributed to Rabbi Yoḥanan in BT *Yoma* 38b: “The blessed Holy One saw that the righteous are few, so שתלן (*shetalan*), He planted them, throughout the generations, as is said: *For YHVH’s are the pillars of the earth, upon them He founded the world* (1 Samuel 2:8).” See Liebes, *Peraqim*, 372–73; Vol. 8, p. 252, end of n. 5.

The child’s concluding sentence—“Even נוני (*nunei*) fish of, the Great Sea…”—alludes to his father, Rav Hamnuna Sava, who after his death can still appear to the righteous on the road. See above, notes 13, 28, 48.

60. **for eggs of the fish…** Such as the wondrous child, son of Rav Hamnuna Sava.

61. **By the smell of your clothes…** The child senses that the Companions have been contending with the biblical passage about the offensive nations Ammon and Moab, yet without adequate skill.

On the child’s sense of smell, see above, note 4. On the martial metaphor applied to the study of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 34, 321; *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 32:25; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 25; JT *Ta’anit* 4:6, 69b; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; BT *Berakhot* 27b, *Shabbat* 63a, *Megillah* 15b, *Ḥagigah* 14a, *Qiddushin* 24a, 30b, *Sanhedrin* 42a, 93b,

111b, *Bekhorot* 36a; *Rut Rabbah* 4:3; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 3, *Vezot Haberakhah* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 45:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 3:8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:3; 13:10; *Zohar* 1:17b, 226a, 240b; 2:56a, 98a, 110a–b, 111b; 3:42a (*RM*), 59b, 127b (*IR*), 188b–189b, 190b–191a, 272a (*RM*), 278b (*RM*), 296b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 14a (*MhN*); and frequently below.

The extended metaphor of combat throughout this section evokes medieval depictions of dueling knights. See Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 30, 56, 72–73.

62. **do you prefer bread of battle...** A fulfilling and elevated meal must include tussling over the meaning of Torah, so the child offers the rabbis a choice: Do you prefer a relatively mild exchange (leaving the heavy weapons of Torah on the table), or do you wish to recite Grace after Meals following a full-blown battle of Torah?

See *Zohar* 3:272a (*RM*). On the necessity of discussing Torah during a meal, see M *Avot* 3:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on: "If three have eaten at one table without speaking over it words of Torah, it is as though they have eaten of sacrifices to the dead, as is said: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without the Omnipresent* (Isaiah 28:8) [i.e., without discussing God's words]. But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as if they have eaten from the table of the Omnipresent, as is said: *He said to me, 'This is the table that is before YHVH'* (Ezekiel 41:22)." The verse in Isaiah reads: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, with no* מקום (*maqom*), *place* [or: *space*]. In this passage from *Avot*, the last phrase is construed as: *without the Omnipresent*, reflecting the use of *maqom* as a designation of God, apparently denoting immanence.

63. **slingstones...** אבנין דקירטא (*avnin de-qirta*). *Qirta* is a Zoharic neologism meaning "slingshot." See Job 41:20; *Zohar* 1:128a; 3:272a (*RM*); *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 190, s.v. *qirta*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 383–93, especially 389; above, p. 242, n. 29.

64. ***Let not the buckler of armor boast…*** One shouldn't boast of his prowess before the battle, but only after winning.

65. **bells of the Holy Spirit are ringing within him** In rabbinic literature the bell appears as a symbol of revelation and inspiration. See BT *Sotah* 9b, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: "*Shekhinah* was ringing before him like a bell"; and *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:2, in the name of Rabbi Neḥemiah: "When the Holy Spirit rested upon him, his hairs tingled like a bell." Both of these descriptions of Samson are derived midrashically from Judges 13:25: *The spirit of YHVH began* לפעמו (*le-pha'amo*) *to impel him* [or: *to pulsate* (*within*) *him*]. The verb *le-pha'amo* is associated here with פעמון (*pa'amon*), "bell." See JT *Sotah* 1:8, 17b.

In *Zohar* 2:95a, Rabbi Ḥiyya applies the image of the bell to the wandering donkey-driver: "That donkey-driver—is he here? For sometimes in those empty ones, you may discover bells of gold!"

66. **let him eat by the mouth of** the sword That is, "Let him earn his meal by displaying his skills." The biblical idiom "the mouth of the sword" means "the edge of the sword" or perhaps here "the point of the sword."

67. ***When you eat of the bread of the land…*** This passage in Numbers prescribes that before baking bread the first of the dough should be given to the priest as תרומה (*terumah*), which literally means "what is raised," hence, "raised contribution, offering, donation, dedication, gift." The child, either playfully or mistakenly, identifies the *terumah* of dough with עמר התנופה (*omer ha-tenuphah*), *the sheaf of elevation* [or: *waving*], the first sheaf of the (barley) harvest, which was presented to the priest as a springtime firstfruits offering. The biblical term *omer* means "sheaf," but (based on Exodus 16:36) the rabbis understood it as a unit of dry measure (about two quarts) equal to one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour, which was produced from the barley grain and then offered on the altar.

Actually, whereas the *terumah* of dough is brought from a person's home and presented to the priest as a donation, *the sheaf of* *tenuphah* is brought directly from the harvest and dedicated by the priest in the sanctuary. See Leviticus 23:10–11: *You shall bring a sheaf, first of your harvest, to the priest*. והניף (*Ve-heniph*), *He shall elevate* [or: *wave*], *the sheaf before* *YHVH* *to be acceptable for you; from the morrow of the Sabbath the priest* יניפנו (*ye-niphennu*), *shall elevate it*. The child insists that the priest raised the *omer* of barley above, and this upward motion is indicated by the word *terumah* (*raising*). He soon explains the sefirotic significance of both *tenuphah* and *terumah*.

The term *tenuphah* has often been rendered "wave offering," and certain passages in rabbinic literature distinguish between the horizontal motion of *tenuphah* (described as "moving [something] forward and backward") and the vertical motion of *terumah* (described as "moving [something] upward and downward"). See, e.g., M *Menaḥot* 5:6. However, other passages insist that *tenuphah* and *terumah* each involve both horizontal and vertical motion. See *Sifrei*, Numbers 17, 37; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:23; cf. *Sifra, Tsav* 11:11, 39c (all based on Exodus 29:27, which links *tenuphah* and *terumah*. In fact, the term *tenuphah* (like *terumah*) probably means "elevation, elevation offering." See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:461–73. *Targum Onqelos* consistently renders *tenuphah* as ארמותא (*aramuta*), *elevation* [or: *raising*].

On the distinction between *tenuphah* and *terumah*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:461–62, 473–81; idem, *Numbers*, 122. On the child's identification of the two, see *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Emden, *Mitpaḥat Sefarim*, 30; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Rashi on Leviticus 23:17.

The play on תרומה (*terumah*) and תרי ממאה (*terei mi-me'ah*), "two out of a hundred," is based on M *Terumot* 4:3, specifying the size of the *terumah* that should be given to the priest: "The measure of *terumah*: one who is generous, one-

fortieth. The School of Shammai says, ‘One-thirtieth.’ One who is average, one-fiftieth. One who is stingy, one-sixtieth.” In his commentary on this passage, Maimonides writes: “And they have said: ‘תרומה (*Terumah*)—תרי ממאה (*terei mi-me’ah*, two out of a hundred [i.e., one-fiftieth].’” Here, the child adopts this play on words. See *Zohar* 2:200a; 3:179a (*RM*); *TZ* 17, 31a–b.

On the *omer* offering, see M *Menaḥot* 10:1–4; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:192–93; 3:1983–85; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 15:419–20. On the *omer* offering as consisting of barley, see M *Sotah* 2:1; *Sifra, Nedavah* 13:4, 12c; JT *Sotah* 3:1, 18c; BT *Menaḥot* 68b, 84a.

Leviticus 23:15 reads in full: *You shall count from the morrow of the Sabbath, from the day you bring the sheaf of elevation, seven complete Sabbaths* [or: *weeks*], *shall they be*. The verse in Numbers begins: *When you eat of the bread* [or: *the food*] *of the land*.

68. **A mystery of wisdom…** Wheat is the main ingredient in the dough given to the priest as *terumah*, whereas barley is the grain described as *the omer* (*sheaf* or *omer*) *of tenuphah*. On all these terms, see the preceding note. On Rabbi Shema’yah, see above, note 6, and at note 11.

69. **תנופה (*Tenuphah*)… תנו פה (*Tenu peh*), Give a mouth…** *Shekhinah* is pictured as the Divine Mouth, which Israel gives and raises to Her spouse, *Tif’eret* (the blessed Holy One), when they offer praise with their mouths. She is also known as *glory*. By raising the *tenuphah* and praising God, Israel stimulates the union of the divine couple.

70. **is *the bread of the land* barley?…** The child had identified this *bread* (whose dough is offered as *terumah*) with the *omer* (sheaf or omer) of barley, offered as *tenuphah*. (See above, note 67.) He realizes that *the bread of the land* is actually made of wheat, not barley, but the latter is offered as *tenuphah* because it is the first grain to sprout.

The word שעורה (*se’orah*), “barley,” can be construed as ה שעור (*shi’ur he*), “the measure of *he*,” alluding to a particular aspect of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the letter (and female marker) ה (*he*). The word *shi’ur* (measure) suggests שעור קומה (*shi’ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature.”

The middle letter of the word חִטָּה (*ḥittah*), “wheat,” is ט (*tet*), written here “with a dot in the middle.” This dot helps to distinguish חִטָּה (*ḥittah*) from חטאה (*ḥata’ah*), “sin,” which characterizes the demonic Other Side. The dot also alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is sometimes pictured as the central point. Furthermore, *ḥittah* alludes to the fact that *Shekhinah*, the Divine Daughter, מתחטא (*mitḥatta*), “endears Herself,” to *Ḥokhmah*, Her Father. Finally, the numerical value of חטה (*ḥittah*) is twenty-two, suggesting the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, pointing again to *Shekhinah*, who is the realm of divine speech.

The description of *Shekhinah* endearing Herself to Her Father recalls a rabbinic account of a statement made by Shim’on son of Shetaḥ (president of the Sanhedrin) to the miracle-worker Ḥoni the Circle-Drawer. See M *Ta’anit* 3:8: “What can I do to you, for you מתחטא (*mitḥatte*), ingratiate yourself [or: endear yourself; importune; act petulantly], before the Omnipresent and He grants your desire, like a son who ingratiates himself before his father and he grants his desire.” See *Zohar* 1:45b (*Heikh*).

On *Shekhinah* as the point, or central point, see *Zohar* 1:6a; 2:204a–b, 222b, 229a–b, 242b; 3:191a, 250a; *ZḤ* 69d–70c (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110; Joseph Gikatilla, cited in Elijah de Vidas, *Reshit Ḥokhmah, Sha’ar ha-Qedushah*, 2; Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 225, n. 152; idem, “Coronation of the Sabbath Bride,” 315–24; Abrams, *Ha-Guf ha-Elohi ha-Nashi ba-Qabbalah*, 45–53; Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 70–72.

On *ḥittah* and *ḥata’ah*, cf. BT *Berakhot* 61a. On *ḥittah* as signifying the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, see *TZ* 17, 31a; 69, 114a. On the association of the twenty-two letters

with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:156b–157a (*ST*); Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 60–61.

71. **drawing the bow** Challenging the child.

72. **Surely, we call Her חטה (*ḥittah*), wheat…** But if so, how can this name of Hers include the letters ט ח (*ḥet, tet*), which imply חטא (*ḥet*), “sin”? After all, these two ominous letters do not appear in any of the names of the twelve tribes.

On the missing letters, see JT *Yoma* 7:5, 44c; BT *Yoma* 73b; *Ba’alei ha-Tosafot* on Genesis 49:1; *Zohar* 1:3a; 2:152a (from the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava), 230a; Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 47:28; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:367; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 49:1, n. 21; Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 62. While BT *Yoma* specifies *tet* and צ (*tsade*), JT *Yoma* specifies *ḥet* and *tsade*, though a scribal gloss adds *tet*.

73. **ט ח (*ḥet, tet*) dwell close to Her…** Demonic forces are situated near *Shekhinah*, eager to taint Her or to draw power from Her.

See *Zohar* 1:36b–37a, 54b; 2:219b, all of which apply the following verset to *Shekhinah*: *At the opening crouches* חטאת (*ḥattat*), *sin* (Genesis 4:7).

74. **Why does that Daughter hold these letters?…** How could the holy realm of *Shekhinah* include the ominous letters ט ח (*ḥet, tet*)? The child indicates that *Shekhinah* is pictured as the Tree of Knowledge, from which Adam (and Eve) ate; and according to one rabbinic tradition, this “tree” was actually חטה (*ḥittah*), “wheat.” By sinning, Adam separated *Shekhinah* from *Tif’eret*, leaving Her vulnerable to the Other Side, who is characterized by חטא (*ḥet*), “sin.” However, when the Tree of *Shekhinah* defeats the Other Side, She seizes its letters *ḥet* and *tet*, as indicated by the fact that these letters are included in Her name *ḥittah*.

See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The view that the Tree of Knowledge was actually wheat is attributed to Rabbi Me’ir in various rabbinic sources. See *Bereshit Rabbah*

15:7; BT *Berakhot* 40a (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah), *Sanhedrin* 70a–b (Rabbi Yehudah); *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 42, 175a. On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, p. 8, n. 17. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the demonic realm, see above, p. 200, n. 41.

75. **The ancient Companions…** Early authorities explained that Adam's sin involved *ḥittah* "simply," that is, eating actual wheat, but this is far from its deeper sense. Later authorities discovered that the word alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is "*ḥittah*, really!"

Isaiah shed further light when he prophesied: *You will be far from oppression…* וממחתה (*u-mi-meḥittah*) *and from ruin; it will surely not come near you*. Without the nominal prefix מ (*mi-*), the word מחתה (*meḥittah*), *ruin*, resembles חטה (*ḥittah*), "wheat." The substitution of the letter ת (*tav*) for ט (*tet*) alludes to "תבירו (*teviru*), destruction, for the Other Side" when *Shekhinah* overwhelms the demonic forces, becoming *meḥittah, ruin*, for them.

As mentioned above (note 70), in the word חִטָּה (*ḥittah*), the dot in the middle of the letter ט (*tet*) helps to distinguish חִטָּה (*ḥittah*) from חטאה (*ḥata'ah*), "sin," which characterizes the demonic Other Side.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *In righteousness you will be established. You will be far from oppression, you will surely have no fear;* וממחתה (*u-mi-meḥittah*), *and from terror* [or: *and from ruin*], *it will surely not come near you*.

76. **You, Companions…** The seven species of grain apparently include "the five species of grain" often referred to in rabbinic literature (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye) plus rice and millet.

The child quotes the verse in Psalms 1 to demonstrate the link between *chaff* and *the wicked* (including the Other Side). The Holy Spirit is one of the many designations of *Shekhinah*.

On the species of grain, see M *Ḥallah* 1:1, *Pesaḥim* 2:5; *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 8; BT *Berakhot* 35b, 36b–37b; *Zohar*

1:157a; 3:244a; above, p. 138, n. 260. Cf. Deuteronomy 8:8, which lists seven species of grain and fruit.

On the share reserved for (or given to) the Other Side, see above, note 11. On Rabbi Shema'yah, see above, note 6, and at notes 11, 68. The full verse in Psalms 103 reads: *For the wind passes by and it* [or: *he*] *is no more, and its place* [or: *his place*] *no longer knows it* [or: *him*]. The subject *it* (or *he*) is either the grass or the human being.

77. **This refers to the female…** Chaff is associated with the demonic female (Lilith), while straw signifies the demonic male (Samael).

On chaff being exempt from tithing, see BT *Berakhot* 31a (and parallels); cf. M *Pe'ah* 1:6. On chaff and straw being exempt from tithing, see *Zohar* 2:120b (*RM*), 272a (*RM*); *TZ* 17, 31a; 69, 114a.

78. ה **(*He*)—clean grain…** In the word חִטָּה (*ḥittah*), "wheat," the letter ה (*he*), which is often a female marker, symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is not tainted by the demonic forces symbolized by chaff and straw. These latter two are symbolized by the letters ח ט (*ḥet, tet*), which signify חֵטְא (*ḥet*), "sin."

See *TZ* 17, 31a. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Knowledge (from which Adam ate), and on this "tree" as being wheat, see above, note 74.

79. **the verse with which we began…** Namely, *When you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present* תְּרוּמָה (*terumah*), *a donation, to YHVH* (Numbers 15:19). The child had identified the *terumah* of dough with the first *omer* (sheaf or omer) of the barley harvest. See above, notes 67, 70.

Barley, which is the first grain harvested, is available "for a grazing animal, unspecified," that is, for *Shekhinah* (or also for *Shekhinah*). She is pictured as an enormous beast consuming a thousand mountains. She is also pictured as תְּרוּמָה (*terumah*), literally "what is raised," alluding to Her ascent toward Her spouse, *Tif'eret*. By offering *terumah*, one helps to raise *Shekhinah* and consummate the divine union.

Her food is called “bread of *terumah*,” and this is offered at night, the time associated with *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Leviticus refers to a priest who is ritually impure and must immerse himself in water: *When the sun sets, he becomes pure, and afterward he may eat of the holy* [or: *of the holy donations*], *for it is his bread* [or: *his food*]. According to rabbinic tradition, the phrase *of the holy* refers specifically to *terumah*. The child contrasts this to holier things, based on M *Ḥagigah* 3:1: “Greater stringency applies to the holy [i.e., sacrificial offerings] than to *terumah*.” On the verse in Leviticus, see BT *Yevamot* 74b; Rashi on Leviticus 22:7; *Zohar* 2:101b (Vol. 5, p. 51, n. 144). Cf. M *Nega’im* 14:3; *Sifra, Emor* 4:1, 96c; BT *Berakhot* 2a.

The image of “a thousand mountains” appears in Psalms 50:10: *For Mine are all animals of the forest*, בהמות (*behemot*), *beasts, on a thousand mountains*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the apparent plural, *behemot*, is actually singular. See *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 22:10, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “It is one beast, crouching on a thousand mountains—and a thousand mountains grow various kinds of vegetation for her and she eats.”

See Job 40:15, 20; BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 6:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16, 80b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 11; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 12; *Nitsavim* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:18; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:49, nn. 141–42. On the association of “a thousand mountains” with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:18b, 223a; 2:203a; 3:60b, 217a, 240b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 201–2.

On barley as food for animals, see 1 Kings 5:8; BT *Pesaḥim* 3b; M *Sotah* 2:1; *Zohar* 3:98a–b (*RM*). For the phrase “bread of *terumah*,” see Rashi on Leviticus 23:17; Moses of Coucy, Sefer *Mitsvot Gadol*, 202; Benarroch, “Sodo shel Yanuqa,” 32, 64. On *Shekhinah* as *terumah*, see Vol. 5, p. 189, n. 12.

80. **The Holy Land…** The Holy Land symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is wedded to *Tif’eret* (the blessed Holy One) and

protected from the demonic Other Side. To see if She has remained faithful to Her spouse, Israel offers the first *omer* (sheaf or omer) of the barley harvest, which the child had identified with *terumah*.

This offering resembles the one described in the book of Numbers, concerning a wife suspected of adultery. Such a woman is tested by being made to drink a potion; if she is guilty, *her belly will swell and her thigh sag* (Numbers 5:27). Before the potion is prepared, the jealous husband brings an offering on behalf of his wife, which is called *a grain offering of jealousy* and consists of *one-tenth of an ephah of barley flour* (ibid., 15).

On God's direct control of the land of Israel, see BT *Ta'anit* 10a; *Tanḥuma, Re'eh* 8; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25; *Zohar* 1:61a, 84b, 108b; 2:141a–b, 151b, 209a–b. On the Holy Land being protected from demonic powers, see also *Zohar* 2:130a, 140b–141a, 173a. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the demonic realm, see above, p. 200, n. 41.

On the child's identification of the *omer* of barley as *terumah*, see above, notes 67, 70, 79. On the parallel between the *grain offering of jealousy* and the *omer* offering, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 28:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 18, 92b; *Zohar* 3:96a–b, 97a (*Piq*). On the ritual of the wife suspected of adultery, see Vol. 8, p. 293, n. 20.

81. **The blade of a sword...** Rabbi Abba declares that he is hereby challenging the child.

82. **The Holy Land has no alien authority...** If *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the Holy Land) is protected from the demonic Other Side, then the grain growing in the Holy Land should contain no chaff or straw (which represent demonic forces). See above, notes 76–77.

83. **If the serpent had not copulated with Eve...** By that primal act, the serpent injected Eve with the evil impulse. Since this impulse fuels sexual desire, the child

wonders if, without that element, Adam and Eve would have ever generated offspring.

At Sinai, the people of Israel were purified of the evil impulse and regained the innocence of Eden; they were reinfected only because of their sin with the Golden Calf. So if they hadn't committed that sin, how would they have generated offspring?

See *Zohar* 1:60b–61a. On the serpent infecting Eve, see BT *Yevamot* 103b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust]. Israel, who stood at Mount Sinai—their filth ceased. Star-worshipers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease."

On the link between the evil impulse and sexual desire, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:7, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el, commenting on *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31): *"Look, it was very good*—this is the good impulse; *and look, it was very good*—this is the evil impulse. Is the evil impulse *very good?* How astonishing! Yet were it not for the evil impulse, no man would ever build a house, marry a woman, or engender children.'"

On the link between the sin of the Golden Calf and procreation, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 5a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Let us be grateful to our ancestors, for if they had not sinned [with the Golden Calf], we would never have come into the world!"

On the passage in *Yevamot*, see above, p. 43, n. 121. On the elimination of the evil impulse at Sinai, see also *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:15 (on 1:2); *Pesiqta Rabbati* 41, 174a; *Zohar* 1:52b; 2:183a–b, 193b; 3:97b (*Piq*).

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:11; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:1. Cf. BT *Yoma* 69b; *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:93b (Vol. 4, p. 532, n. 603). On the midrashic reading of Genesis 1:31, cf. above, p. 237, n. 15.

Genesis 1:27–28 reads: *God created the human in His image; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and conquer it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and every living creature that crawls upon the earth."*

84. **Adam would have immediately generated offspring…** Since right after he was created (and before the serpent approached Eve), God had commanded him *Be fruitful and multiply*. But their offspring would have been totally pure, conceived immaculately, without any influence of the evil impulse. See *Zohar* 1:60b–61a. For the full verse in Genesis, see the preceding note.

85. **Similarly, the Holy Land…** In the Holy Land (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), even chaff and straw are pure, with no evil or demonic traces. The phrases "that side" and "the Other Side" both refer to the demonic realm.

The comparison of ape to human appears in rabbinic sources. See BT *Bava Batra* 58a, in the name of Rabbi Bana'ah: "Compared with Sarah, all others are like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Eve, Sarah was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Adam, Eve was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with *Shekhinah*, Adam was like an ape compared with a human."

See *Zohar* 2:148b (Vol. 5, p. 364, n. 492); 3:192a, 268b, 284b; *ZḤ* 8c. In Christian literature and art, Satan sometimes appears as an ape, and he is occasionally called *simia Dei*, "the ape of God." See Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature*, 120–29; Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, 13–22, 25–26, n. 39; Scholem; Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 10:65.

86. ***On the vine three tendrils…*** The child quotes the account of the chief cupbearer's dream to Joseph. The first verse conveys "vision of the matter," that is, the spiritual

essence of the dream; whereas the following verse describes the actions of the cupbearer himself.

The context in Genesis (40:9–11) reads: *The chief cupbearer recounted his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream—here, a vine in front of me, and on the vine three tendrils, and as she was budding, up came her blossom, her clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and I placed the cup in Pharaoh's palm*."

87. **There are seven heavens…** Representing the seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*, also depicted as palaces. Without *Shekhinah* Herself, these are six; and if *Tif'eret* and *Yesod* are considered as one, they are five. All these seven lower *sefirot* issue from *Binah*, and this flow of emanation is pictured as wine. This divine wine originates in *Keter*, who is known as *Attiqa Qaddisha* (the Holy Ancient One), alluded to here by the wording עתיקא קדישא (*attiqa qaddisha*), "ancient, holy."

Jacob (who symbolizes *Tif'eret*) drew this wine ultimately "from afar"—from the far reaches of the highest *sefirot*—though he squeezed it from the grapes of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the vine described in the cupbearer's dream). Jacob brought this wine fittingly to his father, Isaac, since Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah*, who receives the wine of emanation from *Binah*. In the biblical description *He brought* לו (*lo*), *him, wine*, beneath the word לו (*lo*) appears a rare tonal accent (or cantillation sign): *merkha kefulah*, "a double *merkha*," consisting of two parallel curves. This double sign alludes to both Isaac ("him below") and *Gevurah* ("him above").

On the seven heavens, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; BT *Ḥagigah* 12b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 37; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; *Zohar* 1:32b, 41a (*Heikh*), 85b–86a; 2:10b, 30b, 56b, 164b–165a; 3:9b, 287a. On *Shekhinah* as the vine in the cupbearer's dream, see *Zohar* 1:192a, 238a–b. For the child's interpretation of another accent sign, see below at notes 141–42.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *He* [namely Isaac] *said, "Serve me, that I may eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you* [or: *so that I may give you my innermost blessing*]." *He* [namely Jacob] *served him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank*. On this verse, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 16; *Zohar* 1:142b; 3:100a (*Piq*), 258b.

88. **Enoch-Metatron...** Concerning Enoch, Genesis 5:24 states: *Enoch walked with God; and he was no more, for God took him*. In postbiblical literature this verse is taken to mean that God transported Enoch through the heavens and transformed him into the angel Metatron. Enoch-Metatron serves as head of the Heavenly Academy, and here the child quotes one of his teachings.

Jacob poured water (symbolizing *Ḥesed*) into the wine (symbolizing *Gevurah*, or *Din* [Judgment]), thereby assuaging its harshness. Otherwise, Isaac "could not have tolerated it." In the verset *He brought* לו (*lo*), *him, wine*, the rare accent *merkha kefulah* extends the intonation of the word לו (*lo*), alluding to the extended flow of emanation from one sefirotic rung to another, until it is tasted by *Yesod* (who is symbolized by Joseph). *Yesod* is pictured as the male *beloved* in Song of Songs.

Metatron is often referred to as נער (*na'ar*), "youth, lad, (heavenly) servant," which links him with the child. On this title for Metatron, see above, pp. 5–6, n. 12. On the relation of Metatron to the figure of the child, see Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 95–97; idem, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 331–35. On his role as head of the Heavenly Academy, see pp. 133–34, n. 245; p. 242, n. 30.

In Hellenistic and rabbinic culture, wine was normally diluted with water. On *merkhah kefulah*, see the preceding note. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your palate is like fine wine—flowing to my beloved smoothly, gliding over* [or: *trickling over*; *stirring*] *lips of sleepers*.

89. **Surely, this wine is yours…** Referring not only to the wine on the table in front of them, but also to the wine of emanation, which has inspired the child to provide the Companions "wine of Torah."

On the fine wine of Torah, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:1; BT *Avodah Zarah* 35a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:1; 27:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:3; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:4; *Zohar* 2:124b; 3:39a, 95a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 319.

90. **That vine is still waiting to yield fruit…** The child insists that the verse in Genesis (*On the vine three tendrils*…) has much more to yield.

Shekhinah is pictured as the holy vine, whereas the demonic female, Lilith, is called *alien vine*. The definite article in the phrase *on the vine* refers to "the well-known one," namely *Shekhinah*.

On the contrast between the two vines, see *Zohar* 1:238a–b. The full verse in Genesis reads: *On the vine three tendrils, and as she was budding, up came her blossom, her clusters ripened into grapes*. For the biblical context, see above, note 86. The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *I planted you as a noble vine, of entirely faithful seed. How then did you turn before Me into a corrupt, alien vine?*

91. **When that vine reaches Her…** As *Shekhinah* grows, She puts forth *three tendrils*, manifesting the potency of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

Wine is required for various joyous and sacred occasions, such as *Qiddush* (Sanctification) and the wedding ceremony. See BT *Pesaḥim* 107a: "One should recite *Qiddush* only over wine, and one should recite a blessing [i.e., Grace after Meals] only over wine." See ibid. 109a, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Bateira, "There is no joy except with wine." See JT *Berakhot* 8:1, 11d; *Pesaḥim* 10:2, 37c; BT *Bava Batra* 97a; *Zohar* 3:95a.

On the *three tendrils*, see *Zohar* 1:192a, 238a. For the full verse in Genesis, see the preceding note.

92. ***As she was budding…*** *Shekhinah* adorns Herself to unite with Her beloved, *Tif'eret*. She is impassioned by the flow of emanation, which blends the wine of *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—with the water of *Ḥesed*.

When one recites Grace after Meals over a cup of wine and reaches the conclusion of the second blessing ("for the land and for the food"), he should pour water into the wine, thereby stimulating a similar process above, by which the harshness of *Din* is assuaged by the flow of *Ḥesed*. This ensures that the following blessing (which begins "Have compassion over Israel, Your people") will result in true Compassion—which designates *Tif'eret*, who Himself blends *Ḥesed* and *Din*. Otherwise, the harshness of *Din* itself would be intolerable.

The cupbearer related his dream to Joseph because the latter symbolizes *Yesod* (the divine phallus) upon whom the sefirotic union depends.

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:192a, 238a–b. For the full verse, see above, note 90. On the second blessing of Grace after Meals, see above, note 45. On adding water to the cup of wine during this second blessing, see Alfasi, *Berakhot* 38a (on BT *Berakhot* 51a); *Tosafot, Shabbat* 76b, s.v. *kedei*; Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1:83; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Berakhot* 7:15; Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:220 (and n. 67); Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi, on Alfasi, *Berakhot* 37b (on BT *Berakhot* 51a); *ZḤ* 44a; Solomon ben Abraham Adret on BT *Berakhot* 51a; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 183; Yom Tov ben Abraham Ishbili on BT *Berakhot* 51a; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 183:2; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 46.

93. **Enoch-Metatron said…** On this figure, see above, note 88.

As mentioned above (note 91), the *three tendrils* correspond to the three patriarchal *sefirot*: *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who unite with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the vine*). There is also a fourth *sefirah* who unites with Her, namely *Yesod*, who is alluded to in the continuation of the verse: *up came her blossom*.

Enoch-Metatron plays with two senses of the verb פרח (*prḥ*): "to bud" and "to fly." The verse from Samuel now implies that *Shekhinah rode upon Yesod* (pictured as *a cherub*) *and flew*. The full verse (which appears almost identically in Psalms 18:11) reads: *He rode upon a cherub and flew, soaring on* [or: *seen on*] *the wings of the wind*.

94. **bread and wine are the essence...** The child had elucidated both of these: the bread, by expounding the verse *When you eat of the bread of the land* (above at notes 67–85); and the wine, by expounding the verses *On the vine three tendrils* and *He brought him wine* (above at notes 86–93).

The child claims that he has enriched Torah by probing the inner meaning of these verses; now Torah implores the Companions to partake of the meal, while delighting in Torah.

95. ***Moab said to the elders of Midian...*** Since the verse employs the wording *the elders of* only in relation to Midian and not to Moab, the child concludes that the young Moabites sought advice from *the elders of Midian* as to how they could destroy Israel. *The elders of Midian* acceded to their request and gave them evil advice.

Jethro, the Midianite priest, had welcomed Moses into his home and given him his daughter Zipporah in marriage. The clause "he and all his household were drawn after him" may refer to the tradition that Jethro converted. See *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1–2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:27; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Zohar* 2:68a–b. On the Midianites' informing Moab about Moses'

time in Midian, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:4.

"The affair of Peor" refers to the tragic event that occurred at Abel Shittim (Brook of the Acacias), northeast of the Dead Sea (Numbers 25). This was Israel's last stop on their trek through the desert, where many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites died in a plague, in addition to those who were slain by the Israelite officers.

According to one rabbinic tradition, the Midianites devised the plan to seduce the Israelite men at Peor. See *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Numbers 785. Cf. Numbers 31:16 (quoted in the following paragraph). On the verse in Numbers 22, see above at note 54. For the full verse (and its context), see above, p. 232, n. 1.

96. **On their advice, Balaam was commissioned…** After Moab consulted *the elders of Midian*.

On Midian and Moab prostituting their wives and daughters, cf. *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 24:25–25:1; *ZḤ* 78b (*MhN, Rut*). The context in Numbers (31:15–16) refers to the Midianite women who had been captured by the Israelites: *Moses said to them* [namely the Israelite warriors], *"You have spared every female! Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam's word, led the Children of Israel to betray YHVH in the affair of Peor, and there was a plague among YHVH's community."*

97. **They conspired with their chieftain…** The Midianites instructed their chieftain to send his daughter to seduce Moses. Through sorcery, they foresaw that they would ensnare an Israelite leader, and they assumed that this was Moses.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 82a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:24; cf. *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 29. According to Numbers 25:15, the Midianite woman who had sexual relations with an Israelite (identified below) was *Cozbi*

daughter of Zur, who was chieftain of the leagues of fathers' houses in Midian.

The context in Isaiah (44:24–25) reads: *It is I,* YHVH,*... who annuls the omens of diviners* and makes fools of the augurs; who turns sages back and makes nonsense of their knowledge.

98. **Zimri son of Salu...** According to Numbers 25:14, he was *chieftain of a Simeonite father's house*. When many other Simeonite males saw Zimri coupling with a foreign woman, they did so too, and all twenty-four thousand of them perished in a plague brought by God.

On the sexual encounter between Zimri and Cozbi, see Numbers 25:6–18. According to 25:9, *Those who died in the plague came to twenty-four thousand*. Here the child adopts a rabbinic tradition that all twenty-four thousand were from the tribe of Simeon.

See JT *Sotah* 7:5, 21d; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 10; Rashi on Numbers 26:13. Cf. Mann, ed., *Midrash Ḥadash al ha-Torah*, 68; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 26:14.

99. **for you it is fitting...** Since the Midianites sought to seduce and ensnare Moses.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Moab and Ammon were spared because of two virtuous women who were destined to be born: Ruth the Moabite and Naamah the Ammonite. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David, while Naamah was a wife of King Solomon, the mother of Rehoboam, and thus she too was a matriarch of the Davidic dynasty. Here, the child associates both Ruth and Naamah with Moab. See above, note 50. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 3:198b.

100. **They approached Amalek...** Soon after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, the Amalekites attacked them but were defeated by Joshua and his Israelite fighters while Aaron and Hur were helping Moses to hold his hands aloft. See Exodus 17:8–16; Deuteronomy 25:17–19.

Amalek is particularly despicable because (according to rabbinic sources) they mutilated some of the Israelites by cutting off the covenantal sign of circumcision (or the phallus) and throwing it mockingly toward heaven. In doing so, they threatened *Yesod* (the divine phallus and site of the Covenant).

On Amalek's violent act, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 25:18; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:64; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3:6, 11; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 7, 26b; 12, 51b; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 9–10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tetse* 10, 14; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:3; *Zohar* 2:65b, 67a,195a; 3:30b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 68.

The concluding clause ("that will never be forgotten") recalls Deuteronomy 25:19: *You shall wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens; you shall not forget*. The passage in Judges (6:2–3) reads: *The hand of Midian prevailed over Israel. Because of Midian, the Children of Israel made themselves the dugouts that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. It happened when Israel planted, that Midian and Amalek and the Easterners came up and raided them*.

101. ***YHVH said to me…*** According to Maimonides, this divine command applied only to Moses, not to later generations. See his *Sefer ha-Mitsvot, shoresh* 3; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

Deuteronomy 2:9 reads in full: *YHVH said to me, "Do not attack Moab and do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of his land as a possession—for to the sons of Lot I have given Ar as a possession*." Deuteronomy 2:19 reads in full: *You will approach opposite the Ammonites; do not attack them and do not provoke them, for I will not give any of the land of the Ammonites to you as a possession, for to the sons of Lot I have given it as a possession*.

102. **members of Moses' court…** On Moses' court, see, e.g., M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 2:9.

The “fine pearls” are Ruth and Naamah, for whose sake Moab (and Ammon) were spared. (See above, note 99.) The book of Ruth is set in the time of the Judges. (See Ruth 1:1). According to a rabbinic tradition, Ruth was the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab, who was killed by Ehud.

According to the opening verses of Ruth, Elimelech went to the fields of Moab because of a famine in Judah; and after he died, his two sons (Mahlon and Chilion) married Ruth and Orpah. Here, the child states that while Elimelech was still alive, he married off Mahlon to Ruth.

On Ruth’s being the daughter (or grand-daughter) of King Eglon, see *Targum*, Ruth 1:4; BT *Nazir* 23b (and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *bat beno*), *Sotah* 47a, *Sanhedrin* 105b, *Horayot* 10b; *Rut Rabbah* 2:9; *ZḤ* 78b (*MhN, Rut*). On Ehud’s assassination of King Eglon, see Judges 3:15–30.

103. **If you say that Elimelech converted her…** The child insists that Ruth was not converted before marrying Elimelech’s son, Mahlon.

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Targum*, Ruth 1:4; BT *Bava Batra* 91b; *Rut Rabbah* 2:4, 9; *Tanḥuma, Behar* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Behar* 8; *Tosafot, Ketubbot* 7b, s.v. *ve-ha bo’az*; *ZḤ* 81a (*MhN, Rut*). For the opposite view, see *ZḤ* 79a (*MhN, Rut*). On Ruth 1:16 as implying conversion, see BT *Yevamot* 47b; *Rut Rabbah* 2:22–23, 25; *Midrash Mishlei* (ed. Buber) 31:49.

104. **Naamah issued from among the Ammonites…** As mentioned above (note 99), she was a wife of King Solomon (son of David), the mother of Rehoboam, and thus a matriarch of the Davidic dynasty. Now that the two pearls (Ruth and Naamah) had both issued, it was time for David to punish the descendants of the Moabites who had seduced the Israelites to sin.

The word חבל (*ḥevel*) means “rope, cord, length of rope, (measuring) line.” In the verse from Deuteronomy, Israel is described as חבל נחלתו (*ḥevel naḥalato*), *His allotted possession* (allotted to God, as it were, by a measuring line). The child

construes this phrase as *the line of His possession*, which he associates with the description in Samuel of how David killed two-thirds of the defeated Moabites by measuring them out with *ḥevel*, *a line*. The full verse there reads: *He struck down Moab, and measured them out* בחבל (*ba-ḥevel*), *with a line* [or: *with a cord*], *making them lie on the ground, and he measured two lengths of a line to put to death and one full length* [or: *length of line*] *to keep alive. And Moab became tribute-bearing vassals to David*.

As demonstrated in the following paragraph, the "*line* of *YHVH*'s possession" represents *Shekhinah* (also known as Assembly of Israel). She seized the Moabites who were doomed to death.

On the Moabites' seduction of the Israelites, see above, note 95. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Indeed, YHVH's share is His people, Jacob His allotted possession*.

105. **מלא החבל (*melo ha-ḥevel*), *one full length of line…*** The word *melo*, *full*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *glory*, and of whom is written *The whole earth* מלא (*melo*), *is full of, His glory*. When David said "This [Moabite] is to be spared, and that one is to be killed," *Shekhinah* (the divine *line*) seized those who were to die. For the full verse in Samuel, see the preceding note.

106. **As for Midian…** Gideon defeated them, as recounted in Judges 6–8.

The concluding sentence indicates that if any enemy of Israel is destined to generate someone virtuous (such as Ruth and Naamah), God delays punishing them "until that good emerges into the world."

107. **prepare weapons…** To strive in the battle of Torah. See above, note 61.

108. **He invited the angels on high to bless Him…** They are described as *mighty in strength, fulfilling His word, heeding the sound of His word*. Originally, the angels alone performed God's will and fulfilled His word. But at Mount Sinai, when Israel declared *All that YHVH has*

spoken נעשה ונשמע (*na'aseh ve-nishma*), *we will do and we will heed* [or: *listen*], they demonstrated true faith: committing themselves to fulfill and enact God's word even before hearing the details. Thereby they became equivalent to the angels, who *fulfill* (or "do") God's word even before *heeding* (or "listening to") it.

From then on, Israel "took over עשייה (*asiyyah*), doing, from the ministering angels and were included in *His word*," that is, they were themselves described as *fulfilling His word*. While the angels still acted alone above, now Israel actualized and consummated God's word below on earth.

On the significance of Israel's declaration *na'aseh ve-nishma, We will do and we will heed* [or: *listen*], see *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 13; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 24:7; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 320; *Tosefta Bava Qamma* 7:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:4; BT *Shabbat* 88a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:5, 12; 2:1–3; 3:9; 4:9; 5:2; 6:5; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 2, *Vayiqra* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiqra* 1; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179.

109. **Blessing was entrusted to them alone…** The angels are capable of blessing God on their own, without Israel's participation. But as for the *Qedushah*—whose central declaration is *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts*…—the angels can perform this only together with Israel.

The full verse in Isaiah, recording the prophet's vision of the angels, reads: *One called to another, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."* One might assume, then, that the angels recite this on their own. However, according to a Talmudic tradition (BT *Ḥullin* 91b), "The ministering angels do not utter song above until Israel sings below."

On this Talmudic quotation, see *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 90a (*ST*), 231a; 2:129a–b, 164b; 3:66a; *ZḤ* 12b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 91.

Cf. the opening line of *Qedushah* in the *musaf* service (according to the Sephardic version): "A crown is given to You, *YHVH* our God, by the countless angels on high together with Your people Israel assembled below. Together all of them proclaim Your holiness thrice, as is written by Your prophet: *One called to another, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.'*"

110. ***Qedushah* ascends from three worlds...** From the lower world (inhabited by Israel), the world of the angels, and the world of the Divine Chariot. The child insists that *Qedushah* must ascend from all these three realms, not just from the two higher ones. The "three sanctifications" correspond to the threefold formula *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts*.

On the three worlds, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:217; 2:557, 560, n. 39; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. David Kimḥi on Isaiah 6:3. On the significance of the threefold formula *Holy, holy, holy*, see Vol. 5, p. 144. n. 15.

111. ***You shall hallow yourselves...*** The wording here includes elements from the Masoretic text of Leviticus 11:44 and 20:7. The former verse reads: *For I am YHVH your God, and you shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy*. The latter reads: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am YHVH your God*. The wording *for I, YHVH, am holy* appears in a similar context in Leviticus 19:2; 20:26. On the wording here, see Rosenthal, "Al Derekh Tippulam shel Ḥazal be-Ḥillufei Nussaḥ ba-Miqra," 400. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

112. **I have done well...** The child approves of Rabbi El'azar's interpretation, but takes credit for it himself since he reminded the rabbi to wield his mental weapon.

113. **בְּרָכָה (*berakhah*), blessing...** Rabbi El'azar plays on this word and בְּרֵכָה (*berekhah*), "pool." The directive *Bless* implies that one should draw blessings from their source in

the higher *sefirot* (*Binah* or *Ḥokhmah*) until they form a *berekhah* (pool) in *Shekhinah*. The "numerous fish of all kinds" represent either souls or angels, swarming in *Shekhinah*. The name *YHVH* and the image of "the resplendent speculum" both designate *Tif'eret*, the core of the lower *sefirot*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Bless YHVH, O His angels, mighty in strength, fulfilling His word, heeding the sound of His word*.

On the source of blessing, see *Zohar* 2:135b; 3:270b–271a (*Piq*). For the play on *berakhah* and *berekhah*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:2; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 421; idem, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 174; Scholem. On the image of "the resplendent speculum," see below, pp. 399–400, n. 345.

114. **This is for the celestial angels...** They receive the flow of emanation directly from *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), so "to them is said *Bless YHVH*." For Israel, on earth, *Shekhinah* mediates the flow, so they add the word את (*et*), signifying *Shekhinah*. She is the gateway to *Tif'eret* (or *YHVH*), and is also known as *Tsedeq*, Righteousness.

Grammatically, the word *et* is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. Although this little word seems superfluous, already in rabbinic times Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that its presence in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, את (*et*) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from א (*alef*) to ת (*tav*).

On the significance of *et*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a–b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a. On its significance in the prayer formula 'Bless *et YHVH*,' see *Zohar* 2:135b. Cf. Psalms 134:1–2.

The full verse in Psalms 17 reads: *As for me, in righteousness I will behold Your face; I will be sated, when awake, by Your image*. See *Zohar* 1:72a; 3:292a (*IZ*).

115. **it is forbidden for anyone to bless a person…** In the morning, a person should first pray (the *Amidah*) before blessing anyone in greeting. Thereby he draws *Shekhinah* (known as *Et*) upon his own head and upon anyone whom he subsequently greets. If he tries to bless someone before praying, he actually draws upon that person a demonic force, signified by במה (*bamah*), "an (idolatrous) cult site."

See BT *Berakhot* 14a, in the name of Rav: "Whoever greets his fellow before praying [the *Amidah*] has, as it were, made him into a cult site, as is said: *Desist from a human, whose breath is in his nostrils, for* בַּמָּה (*va-meh*), *of what, account is he?* Do not read בַּמָּה (*va-meh*), *of what*, but rather בָּמָה (*bamah*), *a cult site*." In other words, by greeting a human being before acknowledging God, one is, in effect, idolizing that person, who *is accounted as a cult site*. Rather, one should *desist from a human* until after praying.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Zohar* 1:228a, 248a; 2:182a–b, 226b; *ZḤ* 90d–91a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 35; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 42 (50–51); idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 375–76; [idem?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, 16. On the term *bamah*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 3:2316–18.

116. ***mighty in strength…*** For the full verse, see above, note 113.

117. **I have already** said See above at note 108.

118. **but to strike with the sling…** The child urges Rabbi El'azar not to let up in the battle of Torah.

"Sling" renders קירטא (*qirta*), a Zoharic neologism meaning "slingshot." See above, note 63. The full verse in Samuel, describing David's victory over Goliath, reads: *David bested the Philistine with sling and stone; he struck down the Philistine and killed him, and no sword was in David's hand*.

119. ***Black am I but beautiful…*** According to the Midrash on Song of Songs, this verse is spoken by the

Assembly of Israel. Here, the speaker is *Shekhinah*, who shares Her people's exile and yearns for Her lover, the blessed Holy One. Pining for Him so deeply, She shrivels into a single black point, represented by the letter י (*yod*), which unlike nearly all other letters, contains no white within its shape.

Shekhinah's "forces and camps" are Her angels. The concluding line means that *Shekhinah* has no room to shelter Her people Israel.

The image of *Shekhinah* diminishing Herself derives from a story told by Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi in BT *Ḥullin* 60b, according to which the moon was originally the same size as the sun but was told by God: "Go, diminish yourself!" In Kabbalah this story is often applied to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the moon.

On the description here of *Shekhinah* diminishing Herself, see especially *Zohar* 3:197a, 250b. See also *Zohar* 1:20a–b, 34a, 39b, 169b, 181a; 3:203a, 247b (*RM*); *ZḤ* 67a (*ShS*), 69c (*ShS*), 71a (*ShS*). On the story in *Ḥullin*, see Vol. 5, pp. 271–72, n. 230.

On *Shekhinah* as a point, see above, note 70. On the description here of the letter *yod*, see *ZḤ* 69d–70a (*ShS*), 71a (*ShS*); cf. *Zohar* 3:92a. Cf. Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen. "Peirush ha-Otiyyot," 201.

On the midrashic reading of *Black am I but beautiful…*, see *Shemot Rabbah* 23:10; 49:2; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on the verse. The two verses read in full: *Black* [or: *Dark*] *am I but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem—like the tents of Kedar, like Soloman's curtains. Do not stare* [or: *look*] *at me for being blackish* [or: *for I am blackish*], *for the sun has scorched* [or: *glared on*] *me. My mother's sons were incensed at me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have not kept.*

120. ***Like the tents of Kedar…*** The tents of nomadic tribes in the Middle East are normally woven from the wool of black goats. In this verse, the biblical author is playing on

the tribal name קדר (*qedar*), "Kedar," and the root קדר (*qdr*), "to be dark." The child applies the sense of darkness to the form of the letter ז (*zayin*), which like the letter י (*yod*) "contains no white within." See *ZḤ* 70a (*ShS*).

121. ***Like Solomon's curtains…*** King Solomon symbolizes King *Tif'eret*, the core of all six lower *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*. Fittingly, *Tif'eret* is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*), whose numerical value is six. The elongated shape of this letter suggests a curtain. Furthermore, its shape resembles a hook, and the word וו (*vav*) means "hook." This word appears frequently in connection with hanging the curtains in the Dwelling. See, e.g., Exodus 26:32.

On *Solomon's curtains* and the letter *vav*, see *ZḤ* 70a (*ShS*). On the association between the letter *vav* and "curtain," see also *Zohar* 2:164b; *TZ* 5, 19b.

122. ***You will not see me…*** The simple sense of the verset is *Do not look* [or: *stare*] *at me for being blackish* [or: *for I am blackish*]; but the child construes this as "You cannot see (anything in) Me, for I am a tiny black point." See *Zohar* 3:45b, 59b; *ZḤ* 69d–70a (*ShS*).

123. **mighty warriors, Her legions…** Angelic forces who are dependent on *Shekhinah* for sustenance. Their roaring stimulates *Tif'eret* above.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The young lions roar for prey, seeking from God their food*. See *Zohar* 1:208b, 244a.

124. **transformed into ה (*he*)…** *Shekhinah* is transformed from a tiny point—represented by the letter י (*yod*)—into ה (*he*), the last letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*), symbolizing Her full state.

125. ***osei, actualizing, His word…*** Restoring and actualizing the full power of *Shekhinah*, who is known as the divine *word*.

126. ***the mighty in strength*** **and the truly virtuous…** Righteous ones of Israel, who resemble the angels above.

127. **If the prophet Ezekiel had said this…** The child's words would have been wondrous even if spoken by Ezekiel himself, who attained a vision of God on His heavenly throne; all the more so, coming from such a youngster!

On the connection between the figure of a child and Ezekiel, see BT *Ḥagigah* 13a: "There was once a child who expounded on חשמל (*ḥashmal*), *electrum* [mentioned in Ezekiel 1:27], and a fire came forth and consumed him."

128. **I will bless** The child wants to hold the cup of wine and lead the Grace after Meals. See above, note 15.

129. **the Holy Mother…** *Shekhinah*.

130. **Every person is obligated…** According to M *Berakhot* 3:3, men, women, and children are obligated to recite Grace after Meals. *Tosefta Berakhot* 5:17 adds that a man's wife or child may recite Grace on his behalf. However (as recorded in BT *Berakhot* 20b), "the sages said, 'May a curse fall upon the man whose wife or children have to say Grace for him!'"

See Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *mevarekh*; *Zohar* 2:168b (Vol. 5, pp. 479–80, n. 823); 3:19b; *ZḤ* 87d (*MhN, Rut*); *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 345.

131. **he should train his son…** The verse from Proverbs reads: *He who withholds* בר (*bar*), *grain*—יקבוהו לאום (*yiqqevuhu le'om*), *the nation will curse him*. The child construes the first clause as *He who prevents bar, a son* [from reciting Grace after Meals].

In the second clause—יקבוהו לאום (*yiqqevuhu le'om*), *the nation will curse him*—the singular noun *le'om* (*the nation*) is preceded by the plural verb *yiqqevuhu* (*they will curse him*). Actually, this is grammatically acceptable since the noun *le'om* is collective; but the child insists pedantically that either the verb should be singular—יקבהו (*yiqqevehu*), *it will curse him*—or the noun should be plural: יקבוהו לאומים (*yiqqevuhu le'umim*), *nations will curse him*. He quotes the verse from Genesis to prove that *le'om* is a singular noun.

The child proceeds to provide a solution by focusing on the supposedly deficient spelling of the word לאם (*le'om*), *the nation* (in the verse from Proverbs), without the letter ו (*vav*). This spelling allows the word to be read as לאם (*la-'em*), *to the mother*, yielding the meaning יקבוהו לאם (*yiqqevuhu la-'em*), *they will curse him to the Mother*—that is, anyone who prevents his son from reciting Grace will be cursed in the presence of the Divine Mother, *Shekhinah*.

Actually, in the Masoretic text of this verse, the word לאום (*le'om*) includes the letter ו (*vav*). See *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

On the educational purpose of a child's reciting Grace after Meals, see Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 186. On encouraging one's son to hold the cup of blessing, cf. BT *Berakhot* 53b, 66a–b.

On the association between the verses in Proverbs and Genesis, see BT *Sanhedrin* 91b–92a. The full verse in Genesis (spoken by God to Rebekah) reads: *Two nations are in your womb, two peoples from your loins shall issue. People over people* [or: *Nation over nation*] *shall prevail, and the elder shall serve the younger*.

132. **What is meant by *yiqqevuhu*?...** The child now explains this verb in light of the verse in Leviticus, where ויקב (*va-yiqqov*) means *he pronounced*.

On the meaning of *va-yiqqov* in the verse from Leviticus, see *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 3:2107–8, 2117–18. See also *Zohar* 1:37a; 3:106a, 113b, 176b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 360.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name, cursing* [*it*]; *and he was brought to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan*.

133. **Mystery of the matter...** The son and the mother mentioned in the verse from Proverbs 11 can also allude to the Divine Son, *Tif'eret*, and His Mother, *Binah*. Similarly, in the

verse from Proverbs 30, the phrase *his name* alludes to *YHVH Tseva'ot* (referring to *Binah*), while *the name of his son* is Israel, alluding to *Tif'eret*, or *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), the Divine Son.

The full verse in Proverbs 30 reads: *Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of earth? What is his name, and what is the name of his son, if you know?* See *Zohar* 1:154b; 2:79a–b, 197a–b (Vol. 6, p. 120, n. 38). On the Christological parallels, cf. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 144–52.

134. **All the keys of faith…** All the *sefirot* (constituting the realm of mystical faith) are centered in *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, the Son. He declares: *YHVH* [*Binah* and/or *Ḥokhmah*] *said to me*, *"You are My son."* The divine parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, commanded all to *kiss the son*.

Psalms 2:12 reads: נשקו בר (*Nashequ var*), *Kiss the son* [or: *Give sincere homage, Be armed with purity*], *lest He rage and you be lost on the way*. There is no scholarly consensus on the meaning of the phrase *nashequ var*. Christian interpreters applied it to Jesus, the Divine Son. See Ibn Ezra and David Kimḥi, ad loc. On both verses in Psalms 2, see Benarroch, "God and His Son," at nn. 21–24.

135. **they have adorned Him with Judgment and Compassion…** *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* have endowed *Tif'eret* with both *Din* (Judgment) and *Ḥesed* (Love).

136. **לאם (*la-'em*), *to the Mother…*** Namely, to *Binah*; cf. above, note 131. For other interpretations, see Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 89.

137. **לראש משביר (*le-rosh mashbir*), *on the head of the provider…*** Whoever recites Grace after Meals over the cup of wine—inviting and blessing *Shekhinah*—will thereby smash the demonic Other Side. Consequently, *Shekhinah* (who is called Blessing) will settle upon his head. The child is

playing with two senses of the root שבר (*shvr*), "to offer grain; to break, smash."

For another interpretation of *mashbir* (as referring to *Yesod*), see *Zohar* 1:198a; *ZḤ* 29a–b; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 98.

138. **give [the cup of wine]...** See above, note 15.

139. **Rabbi El'azar's wedding celebration...** On this joyous event, see *ZḤ* 9a (*MhN*).

140. **You should not depart except with words of Torah...** See JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 8d: "A person should not depart from his friend with [ordinary] conversation or joking or frivolity or idle chatter, but rather with a word of Torah." See BT *Berakhot* 31a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 5, p. 23.

141. ***And YHVH was going before them...*** Above the word ויהוה (*Va-YHVH*), *And YHVH*, appears an erect accent (or cantillation) sign, known as *pazer*. The child explains that the shape of this sign alludes to the proud stature of *Shekhinah*, who was marching triumphantly out of Egyptian exile. The wording *Va-YHVH* (*And YHVH*) includes Her.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Wherever it is said *And YHVH*, this implies: He and His court." In Kabbalah this court symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Din* (Judgment) and pronounces the divine decree, so the phrase *And YHVH* encompasses "He [the Divine Male, known as *YHVH*] and His court [*Shekhinah*]."

See JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Sanhedrin* 1:1, 18a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 21; *Shemot Rabbah* 12:4; 19:6; Naḥmanides on Genesis 19:24; Exodus 13:21; *Zohar* 1:15b, 64b, 105a, 107b, 159b, 192b, 198a, 240a; 2:37b, 46a–b, 51a, 56a, 86a, 149a, 227b; 3:9b, 149a.

On the word *va-YHVH* in Exodus 13:21, see *Shemot Rabbah* 19:6; Naḥmanides on the verse; *Zohar* 2:46a, 51a. The hermeneutical significance of the prefixed *va-* (*and*) was championed by Rabbi Akiva. See BT *Yevamot* 68b,

Sanhedrin 51b. For the child's interpretation of another accent sign, see above at notes 87–88. On the significance of the erect accent sign, see *Zohar* 3:201a, 203a.

142. ***Was going before them* יומם (*yomam*), *by day*...** The verse reads ויהוה (*Va-YHVH*), *And YHVH, was going before them by day*..., but the child wonders whether *va-YHVH* (which includes both the Divine Male and *Shekhinah*) is actually the grammatical subject, since the accent sign *pazer* (above *va-YHVH*) is technically a disjunctive mark.

He explains that although *Shekhinah* was present, in fact the one *going before them* was not *Shekhinah* but rather *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham and described here as "the Supernal Elder." *Ḥesed* is the first of the lower *sefirot*, from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, and He encompasses all of them. Together, all these six *sefirot* unite with *Shekhinah* (who is pictured as a house), so *Ḥesed* is considered "Master of the House."

The verse in Psalms links *yomam* (*by day*) and *Ḥesed*, or חסדו (*ḥasdo*), *His love*. In the *Zohar*, *Ḥesed* is often associated with morning or daylight. The verse in Jeremiah now alludes to the union of *Ḥesed*—signified by *yomam* (*by day*)—with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *night*) through *Yesod* (known as *covenant*).

The child construes the word *yomam* not as *by day*, but rather as *their day*, namely "the day of other days," the sefirotic day (*Ḥesed*) that encompasses all the sefirotic days from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*. In the verse from Exodus, the initial subject is no longer *va-YHVH* (*and YHVH*) but rather *yomam* (*their day*). The verse now reads יומם לפניהם הולך (*holekh lifneihem yomam*), *Their day was going before them—Ḥesed* was marching before Israel by day—and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *night*) was marching before them by night.

On Abraham as the Elder, see *Zohar* 2:110a, 189b; *ZḤ* 53c, 92a (*MhN, Eikhah*). On the sefirotic significance of the title "Master of the House," see above, p. 69, n. 47. On God swearing to Abraham, see Genesis 22:16; 24:7; 26:3. On *Ḥesed* including all six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, see *Zohar*

1:247a. On *yomam* as *their day*, see Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 376.

On the verse in Exodus, cf. *Zohar* 2:46a–b. The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth*.

143. **may יומם ולילה (*yomam va-lailah*), *their day and night…*** That is, "May *Ḥesed* and *Shekhinah* be before you."

144. **but he attains no name…** Rabbi Shim'on predicts that the child will not attain fame and that he will die young. The concluding sentence refers to Rabbi Shim'on's earlier remark: "The flow of his father shines upon him," which implies that Rav Hamnuna Sava's soul illumines, or has entered, his son.

See above, note 49. Cf. *Zohar* 1:240a; and also BT *Ḥagigah* 13a: "There was once a child who expounded on חשמל (*ḥashmal*), *electrum* [mentioned in Ezekiel 1:27], and a fire came forth and consumed him."

On the saying "When a thin stick flares…," cf. Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 59; *Zohar* 3:241a; *ZḤ* 89d (*MhN, Rut*); above, pp. 107–8, n. 163; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 205–6; idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 40, 103; Joseph Gikatilla, *Sefer ha-Meshalim*, 119, §28.

145. ***Mighty upon earth his seed shall be…*** Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the verse refers to spiritual might, namely mastery of Torah and mastery over one's evil impulse. One who becomes *mighty* in such ways is empowered to convey blessing to others, just as Rav Hamnuna Sava transmitted holiness to his son. The verse in Psalms now implies that one who is spiritually *mighty upon earth shall bless the generation* issuing from him.

On the mighty act of overpowering the evil impulse, see M *Avot* 4:1, in the name of Ben Zoma: "Who is mighty? One who subdues his impulse." On the substitution of יברך (*yevarekh*), *he shall bless*, for יבורך (*yevorakh*), *shall be blessed*, see above, note 42.

146. **But we've seen children…** So why is this particular child destined to die young?

147. **the blessed Holy One yearns to smell the aroma of this apple…** While the child is still pure.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 6:2; *Zohar* 2:96a–b; *ZḤ* 20a–b (*MhN*), 36b (*ST*); Oron, "Motiv ha-Yanuqa," 150–51, 158–59; Benarroch, "Sodo shel Yanuqa," 102–3. Cf. *Wisdom of Solomon* 4:10–11; *Bereshit Rabbah* 25:1 (and Theodor's note); BT *Ḥagigah* 5a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:15; *Zohar* 1:56b; 2:10b. See also M *Sanhedrin* 8:5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 218.

148. ***Root beneath*—like his father…** Namely, Rav Hamnuna Sava, who now dwells in the Heavenly Academy, headed by Metatron. His son is destined to dwell even higher, in the Supreme Academy, among other little children who have died and are subsequently taught by God Himself. On these two academies, see above, p. 54, n. 1; p. 67, n. 43.

149. **Were it not for the fact…** Rabbi Shim'on would intercede on behalf of the child and save his life, but he does not wish to oppose God's will and prevent Him from enjoying the presence and aroma of the young child in the Supreme Academy. At least, though, Rabbi Shim'on prays that the child will not die while his mother is still alive.

1. ***He sent messengers to Balaam…*** The verse contains twenty-eight Hebrew words.

On bird divination (and the association between Balak's name and "a bird"), see above, pp. 233–34 at nn. 2–7; Bar-Asher, "Tsippor ha-Nefesh." The context in Numbers (22:5–6) reads: *He* [namely Balak] *sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the River* [or: *the Euphrates*], *in his people's land* [or: *in the land of the Ammonites*], *to invite him, saying, "Look, a people has come out of Egypt. Look, it has covered the eye of the land, and it is encamped opposite me. Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed*."

2. ***Look, a people has come out of Egypt…*** This quotation combines elements of Numbers 22:5–6, 11.

3. **Balak knew the intention of that wicked one…** King Balak thought that Balaam would be eager to curse Israel and thereby glorify himself.

4. **Balaam's rungs corresponded to them…** They were the demonic counterpart to Moses' rungs.

On the parallel between Moses and Balaam, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357: "*Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses* (Deuteronomy 34:10)—*in Israel* none arose, but among the nations of the world one did! Who is this? Balaam son of Beor."

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:10; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 10, p. 191; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:20; 20:1; *Zohar* 1:10a; 2:21b (*MhN*); 3:193b; *ZḤ* 47c (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b.

On the relationship between the figure of Balaam and that of Jesus, see Urbach, *Me-Olamam shel Ḥakhamim*, 537–55; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 111; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 55; Benarroch, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 237.

5. פתורה (*Petorah*), ***At Pethor…*** This town has been identified with Pitru on a tributary of the Euphrates. Here, drawing on midrashic tradition, Rabbi Yose associates פתורה (*Petorah*), *at Pethor*, with the Aramaic term פתורא (*petora*), "table." To stimulate demonic forces, sorcerers (such as Balaam) would set a table for them and perform certain rites.

See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:7; Rashi on Numbers 22:5. The context in Deuteronomy (23:4–5) reads: *No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the Assembly of YHVH; even his tenth generation shall not be admitted into the Assembly of YHVH ever. Because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way when you come out of Egypt, and for their hiring Balaam son of Beor from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse you*. The name Aram-naharaim means "Aram alongside the River (Euphrates)."

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *As for you who forsake YHVH, who forget My holy mountain, who set a table for Gad and fill a jug of wine for Meni*. Gad is the Near Eastern god of fortune or good luck; Meni is the god of fate or destiny.

6. ***You shall make a table of acacia wood…*** Just as God commanded Moses to fashion a table and holy bread along with various utensils for the Dwelling (or Tabernacle) in order to draw down the Holy Spirit, so Balaam arranged a table with *defiled bread* in order to stimulate the demonic Other Side.

The verse in Ecclesiastes now implies that the Other Side cannot match the Divine King. The Other Side is sometimes described as אדם בליעל (*adam beliyya'al*), *a worthless man* (Proverbs 6:12). See above, p. 108, n. 164.

On the contrast between holy and demonic tables, see 1 Corinthians 10:21. On the image of the Other Side as a monkey, see above, p. 274, n. 85.

7. ***O YHVH, when You came forth from Seir…*** According to rabbinic tradition, before giving the Torah to

Israel, God offered it to the other nations, including the descendants of Esau (who dwelled in Edom or Seir) and the descendants of Ishmael (who dwelled in Paran). However, they all refused to accept its moral constraints.

In rabbinic literature Esau and Edom often represent the Roman Empire, and in medieval Jewish literature they often represent Christians. In medieval Jewish literature, Ishmael often represents Muslims. On the polemical tone, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:69.

On God's offering the Torah to other nations, see *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 1, 5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 343; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:2; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 33:2; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; 3:1; BT *Ta'anit* 25a, *Avodah Zarah* 2b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:2; *Vezot Haberakhah*, p. 449; add. 2, p. 452; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 99a–b; 30, 142a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), pp. 129–30; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 14, *Shemini* 6, *Shofetim* 10, *Vezot Haberakhah* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemini* 10, *Shofetim* 9, *Vezot Haberakhah* 3; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 11, p. 192; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:9; 42:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:10; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 20:2; *Zohar* 2:3a; 3:19b, 91b.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH from Sinai came and He shone from Seir upon them; He radiated from Mount Paran and He arrived from myriads of holy ones; from His right hand, a fiery law for them*.

8. **it is no sin when a person scrutinizes…** Questioning Scripture can be a virtue.

See *ZḤ* 12d (*MhN*); above, pp. 26–27 at n. 67; p. 253, n. 24; Matt, "'New-Ancient Words,'" 198–204. On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13.

9. **Why *from Seir upon them…*** If the verse supposedly implies that God offered the Torah to the descendants of Esau (who dwelled in Seir) and to the descendants of Ishmael (who dwelled in Paran), then it

should read *He shone to Seir upon them; He radiated to Mount Paran*.

10. ***YHVH from Sinai came…*** Rabbi Shim'on explains that the verse reads *from Sinai* because God had descended upon the mountain in a thick cloud and then came to the people. Cf. Exodus 19:18, 20.

11. **through you the matter is revealed…** Stimulated by Rabbi Yose's question, Rabbi Shim'on explains.

Torah issued from God's Mind. When it reached His Left Arm (*Gevurah*), God sought to purge the negative element in that arm (pictured as bad blood). *Gevurah* is symbolized by Isaac, whose two sons (Jacob and Esau) represent respectively the positive and negative elements within *Gevurah*.

On the relation between Torah and Wisdom (or the Divine Mind), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:5, in the name of Rabbi Avin: "Torah is an unripe fruit of supernal Wisdom." See above, p. 212, n. 75. On purging blood from the arm, see *Zohar* 3:218b–219a (*RM*).

12. **Samael…** The heavenly prince of Esau. See *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 8; Rashi on *Sukkah* 29a, s.v. *eloheha*.

The exchange here between God and Samael is based on some of the rabbinic sources cited above (note 7), where, however, God negotiates with the descendants of Esau rather than with Esau's heavenly prince.

13. **skipped to the necessary place** From the beginning of the Torah to that particular verse.

14. **my whole dominion will vanish…** Samael's (and Esau's) dominion depends on killing and waging war.

The Roman god (and the planet) Mars are both associated with war. On the association of Samael with the planet Mars, see Judah ben Barzillai. *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah*, 247.

15. **he thought he was uttering slander…** By encouraging God to give the Torah to Israel, Samael

intended to harm them, making them liable to numerous punishments if they failed to fulfill the *mitsvot*.

16. ***from Seir*, precisely...** From Samael, the prince of Esau, whose nation dwelled in Seir. From Samael's refusal to accept the Torah and his recommendation of Israel, the light of Torah "radiated to Israel." On the concluding sentence, see the preceding note.

17. **You are the firstborn...** Samael represents (or is identified with) Esau, Isaac's firstborn son. Being the firstborn, he deserves the Torah.

18. **Look, my birthright is his!...** According to Genesis 25:29–34, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and swore an oath over the transaction.

19. **remove yourself from it entirely** Even from the seven Noahide commandments, basic moral principles intended for Noah's descendants. The implication here is apparently that Esau's descendants are not rewarded (or fully rewarded) for fulfilling such commandments. See BT *Bava Qamma* 38a, *Avodah Zarah* 2b–3a.

20. ***from Seir*, precisely, namely Samael...** Rabbi Shim'on plays with שֵׂעִיר (*se'ir*), *Seir*, and שָׂעִיר (*sa'ir*), *goat*—namely the scapegoat bearing all of Israel's sins, which was sent off to the desert to the demon Azazel, who is identified with Samael.

Furthermore, the term *sa'ir* means not only "goat" but also "demon, satyr." See Vol. 7, pp. 415–16, n. 180. The verse in Leviticus reads: *The goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities to a remote region* [or: *a cutoff land*; *a barren land*].

21. **Once He eliminated this...** Having eliminated the possibility of Samael's (and Esau's) association with Torah and holiness, God turns to His Right Arm (*Ḥesed*) and sees a negative element there too (pictured as bad blood). *Ḥesed* is symbolized by Abraham, whose two sons (Isaac and Ishmael) represent respectively the positive and negative elements within *Ḥesed*.

22. **Rahab…** A mythical monster of chaos, whose name (meaning “one who surges”) alludes to the stormy sea. (See Isaiah 51:9; Psalms 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12.) The name Rahab also appears as a poetic designation for Egypt in Psalms 87:4; cf. Isaiah 30:7. In rabbinic literature Rahab is identified as Prince of the Sea. (See BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 1; *Tanḥuma* [Buber], *Ḥuqqat* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:22.) In several midrashic sources, Rahab appears at the Red Sea. (See *Midrash Va-Yosha* [*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:46–47]; *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 14:21.)

In several passages in the *Zohar*, Rahab appears as the prince of Egypt (*Zohar* 2:170b; *ZḤ* 30d); but here Rahab is the prince of Ishmael, as in *Zohar* 3:246b (*RM*). See also Margaliot, *Mal’akhei Elyon*, 286–88.

The exchange here between God and Rahab is based on some of the rabbinic sources cited above (note 7), where, however, God negotiates with the descendants of Ishmael rather than with Ishmael’s heavenly prince.

23. **He skipped ahead…** From the beginning of the Torah to that particular verse. See above, note 13.

In the rabbinic sources describing the exchange between God and the descendants of Ishmael (cited above, note 7), the command revealed to them is *You shall not steal*, whereas the command *You shall not commit adultery* is revealed to the descendants of Ammon and Moab.

24. **an evil legacy…** Rahab (representing Ishmael) refuses the command against adultery, since sexual attraction and lust constitute the basis of his dominion and his blessing.

Rahab, Prince of the Sea, appropriately quotes the blessing in Genesis 1, which is bestowed on the creatures of the sea.

The full verse in Genesis 16 (recording the divine blessing of Ishmael) reads: *He will be a wild ass of a man, his hand against all, hand of all against him; in the presence*

of all his brothers will he dwell. Rabbi Shim'on is playing on פרא (*pere*), *a wild ass*, and פרו (*peru*), *Be fruitful*.

25. **we issued as two sons from Abraham!...** Namely Ishmael and Isaac.

26. ***from Mount Paran*** From the refusal of Rahab (representing Ishmael) to accept the Torah and from his radiance. Ishmael dwelled in Paran.

27. **Why is it written...** Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes between the verbs זרח (*zaraḥ*), *He shone*, and הופיע (*hofi'a*), *He radiated*, which he construes more mildly as *He appeared*. The more dramatic and potent verb *zaraḥ* (*He shone*) refers to the light from Samael, whose specialty is killing by the sword. This power was transferred to the people of Israel, who are commissioned to kill when necessary by judicial procedure.

The second verb, *hofi'a* (*He appeared*), is less dramatic and potent; this refers to the blessing associated with Rahab, involving lust. Just a bit of such lust was conveyed to Israel, enough to fuel sexual desire and thereby engender new life.

The phrase "although it was not yours" alludes to the fact that Esau, and not Jacob, was blessed with the power of the sword. See Genesis 27:40 (recording Isaac's blessing of Esau): *By your sword shall you live*. This verse is quoted in some of the rabbinic sources listed above (in note 7), describing why the descendants of Esau could not tolerate the command *You shall not murder*. On the contrast between this blessing of Esau and the wording pertaining to Israel in Deuteronomy (*your triumphant sword*), see *ZḤ* 14a (*MhN*). The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Happy are you, O Israel. Who is like you? A people delivered by YHVH, your protective shield and your triumphant sword*.

On the positive aspect of lust, cf. *Zohar* 2:93b (Vol. 4, p. 532, n. 603); above, pp. 273–74. n. 83.

28. **Once He had obtained these gifts...** From Samael and Rahab, representing Esau and Ishmael. Then

God proceeded to summon the heavenly princes of all the other nations.

On the heavenly princes of the nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, note 7.

29. **the blessed Holy One is a wise doctor…** God first offered the Torah to the heavenly princes of the other nations, for whom certain *mitsvot* were unbearable.

For Torah's opposite effects on Israel and on the nations of the world, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:3, in the name of Rabbi Simon: "The [divine] utterance went forth in two aspects: a vivifying drug for Israel and a deadly poison for the nations of the world."

Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:11; BT *Shabbat* 88b, *Yoma* 72b, *Ta'anit* 7a; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:6; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 25; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9.

According to its simple sense, the obscure verse in Psalms refers to God: *You ascended the heights, You seized captives, You took* [or: *received*] *gifts from* [or: *among, for*] *humans*. In rabbinic literature, this verse is frequently applied to Moses, who *ascended the heights* of Mount Sinai and "captured" the Torah or received it as a gift. Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets the *gifts* as presents offered by the heavenly princes.

See BT *Shabbat* 89a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:11; *Rut Rabbah* 2:3; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 126; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 17, *Vayiqra* 4, *Ha'azinu* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiqra* 6, *Ha'azinu* 3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20, 98a; 47, 191b; *Shemot Rabbah* 28:1; 30:5; 33:2; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:11; *Zohar* 3:103a, 148a.

30. **their ornaments…** According to a rabbinic tradition, at Mount Sinai the people of Israel were adorned with wondrous ornaments (or weapons); but after they worshiped the Golden Calf, they were stripped of these. Here, Rabbi Shim'on identifies these ornaments with the gifts offered by the heavenly princes of the nations.

In the concluding line, *captives* refers to other valuable assets that Moses obtained for the people. See the preceding note; *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelaḥ*, add. 1: "'You came to Mount Sinai, and I Myself descended and spoke with you along with thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels, whom I brought down for your sake. I entrusted each and every Israelite with two angels.' Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'One [angel] girded [each Israelite] with his weapon, and one placed a crown upon [each Israelite's] head.'… Rabbi Simoi said, 'He clothed them with [His] royal purple cloak.…' Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai said, 'He adorned them with weapons engraved with the Ineffable Name [*YHVH*], and as long as they possessed these, no evil could touch them, neither the Angel of Death nor anything else. As soon as they sinned [with the Golden Calf], Moses said to them: *Now take off your ornaments, and I will know what I should do with you* (Exodus 33:5). At that moment, *The people heard this evil word, and they mourned*, [*and no one put on his ornaments*] (ibid., 4). What is written? *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments* (ibid., 6).'"

See above, p. 62, n. 27. The full verse in Exodus reads: *The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb on*.

31. **When they sinned further…** On Israel's sins causing the attack by the king of Arad, see *Rut Rabbah, Petiḥta* 4.

The clause *and took captives from them* can also be rendered *and took some of them captive*. On the significance of these *captives*, see the preceding note. On this verse, see below, pp. 732–33 at n. 2.

On God's returning Israel's ornaments in the time of redemption, see BT *Shabbat* 88a; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see below, p. 731, n. 224.

32. **From here on, utter your words!** Rabbi Shim'on urges Rabbi Yose to offer an interpretation. See above at notes 9–10.

33. ***when You came forth from Seir…*** After the descendants of Esau (or their heavenly prince, Samael) refused to accept the Torah and God returned *from Seir*—and after the other nations (or their heavenly princes) similarly refused—*the earth trembled*, because the whole purpose of Creation was that Israel would accept the Torah, and now the earth feared that Israel, too, would refuse. When Israel declared *We will do and we will heed*, they demonstrated true faith—committing themselves to fulfill and enact God's word even before hearing the details. So then the earth became tranquil.

See BT *Shabbat* 88a: "Ḥizkiyah said, 'Why is it written *From the heavens You made judgment heard; the earth feared, and was still* (Psalms 76:9)? If it feared, why was it still, and if it was still, why did it fear? Well, at first it feared, and finally it was still.' And why did it fear? In accordance with Resh Lakish. For Resh Lakish said, 'Why is it written *It was evening and it was morning*, יום הששי (*yom ha-shishi*), *the sixth day* (Genesis 1:31). Why is there an additional letter ה (*he*) [signifying *the*, whereas the definite article does not appear with any of the preceding days of Creation]? This teaches that the blessed Holy One stipulated a condition with the works of Creation, saying to them: "If Israel accepts the Torah [which was given on *the sixth day* of Sivan], you will endure. If not, I will return you to *chaos and void* (ibid., 2)."'"

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 3a; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 76:4. On the verse in Psalms, see also *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 19:16 *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemini* 10; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 99b–100a; *Zohar* 3:91b. On Torah as the foundation of the world, see Vol. 7, p. 65, n. 200.

On the significance of Israel's declaration *We will do and we will heed*, see above, pp. 284–85, n. 108. On God's offering the Torah to other nations, see above, note 7.

34. **Because Israel said *We will do*...** Their faithful commitment to *do* made them invulnerable to anything that sorcerers are able to "do." Firstly, because of "this," namely their declaration *We will do and we will heed*. Secondly, because when God brought Israel out of Egypt (which was famous for its sorcery), He smashed the power of all types of sorcery against Israel.

For the play on פתורה (*petorah*), *at Pethor*, and פתורא (*petora*), "a table," see above, note 5. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 1.

35. **the verse should read *which is on* נהרים (*naharayim*), *two rivers*...** Given that (according to Deuteronomy 23:5) Balaam came *from Pethor of* ארם נהרים (*aram naharayim*), *Aram-naharaim*, and that the word *naharayim* seems to mean *two rivers*. Rabbi Yose explains that Balaam's sorcerous פתורא (*petora*), "table" (the demonic counterpart of *Shekhinah*) depends on the flow of a single demonic force (the demonic counterpart of the River of *Yesod*), so the singular form הנהר (*ha-nahar*), *the River*, is appropriate.

Actually, the place-name *Aram naharayim* does not mean "Aram of two rivers," but rather "Aram alongside the River (Euphrates)." See Sarna, *Genesis*, 163–64; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 212; 386, n. 37. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 1.

36. **Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya...** According to rabbinic tradition, Rabbi El'azar's father-in-law was named Rabbi Shim'on son of Yose son of Lekonya. The *Zohar* normally switches father and son, transforming Shim'on son of Yose into Yose son of Shim'on. See above, pp. 263–64, n. 55; Vol. 8, p. 27, n. 78.

Here begins a lengthy and fascinating narrative, extending to p. 363 at n. 228. The version translated here

represents the full text in its correct sequence (which has never appeared before as such in any printed version, either Aramaic or English). I was able to reconstruct this full version based on several manuscripts, especially Es3, N18, and N32. The sequence proceeds as follows (according to the pagination of the standard editions): *Zohar* 3:193a–b, 303a–b, 204a–206b, 304a–306a. The material in 3:303a–b also appears in *ZḤ* 53b–d; the material in 3:304a–306a also appears mostly in *ZḤ* 53d–55b and partly in 3:299a–b.

On this narrative (or portions of it), see Tene, "Darkhei Itsuv ha-Sippur be-Sefer ha-Zohar," 120–80; Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 143–57; Benarroch, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 298–305.

37. **when the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden…** To delight with the souls of the righteous. This is an auspicious time for devotees to rise from sleep and engage in Torah. On this midnight ritual, see above, p. 3, n. 6.

38. **unknown** To others.

39. **Were, then, the grand pillars…** Sages of the past devoted themselves to spiritual search, and they certainly knew the inner meaning of this midnight ritual. So why, Rabbi El'azar wonders, does Rabbi Abba refuse to reveal it now?

40. **He opened…** The speaker is apparently Rabbi Abba. The secret meaning of the verse from Isaiah "constitutes the mystery of faith," namely the nature and dynamics of the *sefirot*.

The name *YHVH*—whose first letter, י (*yod*), resembles a single point—symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*. See *Zohar* 2:162a. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* indicates that the name *YHVH* symbolizes the entire sefirotic spectrum. See above, p. 74, n. 60.

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:73a; 3:35b. On the connection between this verse and the midnight ritual, see

below at note 51.

41. ***Elohai, my God…*** This alludes to the Divine Mother, *Binah*, who is often called *Elohim* and is described as *a voice of sheer silence*, from whom issues *Tif'eret*, the audible divine voice.

Binah, is also known as מִי (*mi*), *Who*, which implies that a seeker may inquire about Her, unlike even higher realms, which are so inaccessible that they cannot even be questioned or explored. Still, one should not expect any clear or conclusive answers about the nature of *Binah*. Rather, the mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See Simeon Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:91a: "Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer."

Already in the Midrash, *Who* appears as a divine name designating "the one to whom Israel said at the [Red] Sea, *Who is like You?* (Exodus 15:11)." See *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:13; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:17; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 16:3. On *Binah* as *Who*, see *Zohar* 1:1b–2a, 3b–4a, 29b–30a, 45b, 85b–86a, 237b; 2:105a, 126b–127a, 138a, 139b, 197b, 226a, 231b–232a; 3:185b, 204a.

On *Binah* as *a voice of sheer silence*, see *Zohar* 1:209a; 2:81b; 3:30b. The biblical context in 1 Kings (19:11–12) describes the theophany experienced by the prophet Elijah at Mount Horeb: *He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before YHVH." And behold, YHVH was passing by, and a great, mighty wind splitting mountains and shattering rocks before YHVH; YHVH was not in the wind. After the wind—an earthquake; YHVH was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake—fire; YHVH was not in the fire. After the fire—*קוֹל (*qol*), *a sound* [or: *voice*] *of, sheer silence*.

42. ***You*—beginning of what is susceptible…** Namely *Ḥesed*, first of the seven lower *sefirot* issuing from *Binah*. Here, God can be addressed more directly as *You*, and the questions posed by the spiritual seeker yield answers. *Ḥesed* is pictured as the Priest.

The verse in Psalms reads: *You are priest forever; by My word* [or: *on My word*; *after the manner of*], *My righteous king* [or: *Melchizedek*]. In Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek is the king-priest of Salem (Jerusalem), who participates in Abraham's victory over an alliance of eastern kings. See *Zohar* 2:104a; 3:53b, 271a (*Piq*).

43. **What is meant by *on My word, Melchizedek*?...** *Ḥesed*, the Divine Priest on the right, presides over and sustains *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom). She is pictured as the Divine *word*, articulated by the audible voice of *Tif'eret*, which itself issues from the inaudible voice of *Binah*. *Malkhut* is also known as מלכי־צדק (*Malki-tsedeq*), *Melchizedek* (*My righteous king*).

King David (the Psalmist) refers to *Malkhut* as *My word*, because he is intimately associated with Her and constantly sings Her praises.

The concluding sentence indicates that the pronoun *You* can allude to three different *sefirot*, either *Ḥokhmah, Ḥesed*, or *Shekhinah*. On the first of these, see *Zohar* 2:90a; 3:290a (*IZ*). On the second, see *Zohar* 2:104a; 3:271a (*Piq*). On the third (and most common), see Vol. 6, p. 1, n. 2.

44. **all as one** Apparently referring to *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Ḥesed*, who are signified respectively by יהוה (*YHVH*); אלהי (*Elohai*), *my God*; and אתה (*attah*), *You. Ḥesed* includes within itself all the lower *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* (or to *Shekhinah*). Alternatively, "all as one" refers to all six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*.

45. ***Your name...*** Alluding to *Shekhinah*, who reveals all the divine qualities and is thus God's Name.

46. ***For You have made* פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*...** The *Zohar* construes the verb עשית (*asita*), *You have done*, as *You have made*. The noun *pele* is usually translated here as *wonders*, but now the *Zohar* focuses on the literal, singular sense: *pele, a wonder*.

Furthermore, the *Zohar* associates *pele* (*a wonder*) with concealment. See *Zohar* 3:31a, which quotes Deuteronomy

17:8 (referring to a difficult legal case): *If the matter* ממך יפלא (*yippale mi-mekha*), *is too wondrous* [or: *baffling, difficult*] *for you. Targum Onqelos* renders the phrase as יתכסי מנך (*yitkesei minnakh*), "is concealed from you." Cf. Deuteronomy 30:11; Proverbs 30:18; *Targum*, ad loc.

Here the wondrous "covering and garment" refers to the splendid sefirotic garment(s) below *Keter* (who is known as the Ancient One), concealing that primordial light.

47. **Alternatively, *For You have made* פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*...** The word פלא (*pele*), *a wonder*, can allude to its anagram: אלף (*aleph*), the first letter of the alphabet.

See BT *Shabbat* 104a: "א׳ ב׳ (*Aleph, bet*)—אלף בינה (*Elaph binah*), Learn understanding." Here, this rabbinic saying apparently implies that the letter *aleph* symbolizes *Binah*.

Primordial Adam represents the sefirotic body from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* to *Yesod*, whose embryonic form appears (within the womb of *Binah*) in the shape of the letter א (*aleph*). This shape consists of a diagonal line, with two shorter strokes branching off toward the top right and the bottom left. The diagonal line represents the trunk of the body (which is manifested as *Tif'eret*), while the two shorter strokes represent its arms (manifested as *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*). The numerical value of the letter *aleph* is one, alluding to the unification of all the *sefirot*.

On the passage in BT *Shabbat*, see *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:410); *Zohar* 2:115a (*RM*); *TZ* 55, 88a; 69, 108b; 70, 130a; *ZḤ* 103d (*Tiq*), 112a (*Tiq*). For various interpretations of this cryptic paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

48. **Rav Hamnuna Sava said...** This venerable figure identified *pele* (*a wonder*) with one of the wondrous paths of emanation, specifically the secret passage between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, which is described as *a path unknown to any bird of prey*. See above, p. 201, n. 44.

The phrase "פלאות חכמה (*pil'ot ḥokhmah*), wonders of Wisdom" appears at the beginning of *Sefer Yetsirah*: "thirty-two paths of פלאות חכמה (*pil'ot ḥokhmah*), wonders of Wisdom." Cf. *Zohar* 3:31a. On the figure of Rav Hamnuna Sava, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

49. **עצות מרחוק (*Etsot me-raḥoq*), *Counsels from afar…*** According to its simple sense in this verse, the word *me-raḥoq* has a temporal meaning: *of long ago* (i.e., from far away in time). But here the *Zohar* construes it spatially: *from afar*.

This clause from Isaiah reads *For You have done* [or: *made*] פלא (*pele*), *wonders* [or: *a wonder*], עצות מרחוק (*etsot me-raḥoq*), *counsels of long ago* [or: *from afar*]. In contrast, earlier ("first") in the book, the prophet spoke differently when he provided the throne name of the Davidic king: יועץ פלא (*Pele yo'ets*), *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*. With this complex name, Isaiah was alluding sequentially to nearly all of the *sefirot*; whereas here (in Isaiah 25:1), the clause *For you have* (etc.) is not so inclusive. See *Zohar* 3:31a.

The "two willow twigs" represent the *sefirot Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, who inspire prophecy. See *Zohar* 1:220b (Vol. 8, p. 179); 2:98a–b.

50. **אמונה אומן (*Emunah omen*), *Faithful and true…*** Alluding respectively to *Shekhinah* and *Yesod*, who unite as one. *Shekhinah* is pictured as a garden, watered by the river of *Yesod*, which issues from *Ḥokhmah* (symbolized by Eden). Thus the verse from Isaiah spans the full sefirotic spectrum.

See above, note 40. On the jump in pagination (from 3:193b to 3:303a), see above, note 36. As mentioned there, the material in 3:303a–b also appears in *ZḤ* 53b–d.

51. **A person who awakens at night…** Rising at midnight to engage in studying Torah. At this hour, God enters the heavenly Garden of Eden to delight with the souls of the righteous.

Rabbi Abba recommends reciting the verse from Isaiah, which he has been expounding: *YHVH, You are my God; I will*

exalt You, I will praise Your name. For You have done wonders, counsels of long ago, faithful and true. See above at note 40. On the midnight ritual, see above at note 37; p. 3, n. 6.

52. **the praise of the ancient *ḥasidim*...** According to Sherira Gaon, writing in the tenth century, "it was a custom of חסידות (*ḥasidut*), piety (or devotion), to rise at midnight and utter songs and praises." See above, p. 3, n. 6.

53. **What is the delight of the blessed Holy One?...** Rabbi Abba finally begins to answer the question posed by Rabbi El'azar (above at note 37): "What is this delight, and how does He delight with them?"

The phrase "assuming their forms" alludes to the notion of a spiritual body. According to Kabbalah, before entering a human body, each soul exists in the Garden of Eden, where it is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body it will inhabit on earth. As the soul leaves the Garden, it removes the ethereal body and prepares to put on an earthly body. Eventually, when the soul returns to the Garden upon death, it regains the ethereal body. See above, pp. 30–31, n. 78.

The association of dew with reviving the dead appears in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Yehudah said, '... In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *Your dead will live... my corpses will arise... Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust!... For Your dew is a dew of lights... and the earth will cast forth spirits of the dead*.... (Isaiah 26:19).' Rabbi Tanḥum said, '... From where does it descend? From the head of the blessed Holy One. In the time to come, He will shake the hair of His head and bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake. ... For my head is filled with dew* (Song of Songs 5:2).'" See above, pp. 115–16, n. 189.

On learning from the Messiah, see above, p. 82, n. 81. The phrase “has already been discussed arousingly” renders והא אתערו (*ve-ha it’aru*), “they have already been aroused” (or “they have already discussed”). In medieval Hebrew idiomatic usage, the verb עורר (*orer*), can imply “having one’s awareness aroused,” “arousing the [latent or potential] meaning” of a particular word or phrase, “expounding, interpreting.” See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 392; Ben Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 5:4392a–b.

54. **they all gather and engage…** All the souls enter the Heavenly Academies of Torah.

On the Heavenly Academies, see above, p. 54, n. 1; p. 67, n. 43. On the *Zohar*’s emphasis on innovation and creativity, see above, p. 145, n. 282. On Elijah attending to the patriarchs after their death, see BT *Bava Metsi’a* 85b.

55. **they are all enhanced, male and female…** The male and female souls unite at midnight, generating new souls, pictured as fruit. Each new soul is sheltered beneath the wings of *Shekhinah* “until it is needed,” that is, until a convert-to-be is born.

The title Beauty of *YHVH* often refers to *Binah*. It derives from Psalms 27:4: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze* בנעם יהוה (*be-no’am YHVH*), *upon the beauty* [or: *delightfulness, loveliness*] *of YHVH*, ולבקר (*ul-vaqqer*), *and to reflect* [or: *search, seek, inquire, contemplate*], *in His temple*. See above, p. 51, n. 143.

The phrase “are (all) enhanced” renders מתקנן (*mittaqnan*), “are arranged, arrayed, rectified.” On entering “beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*” as a metaphor for conversion, see above, p. 105, n. 159.

On the union of souls, and on their offspring’s being reserved for converts, see above, p. 105, n. 158. On souls as fruit, see ibid.

56. ***Remember, O YHVH, the Edomites…*** This verse refers to the terrible moment when Jerusalem was

destroyed by the Babylonians with the gleeful encouragement of their Edomite allies.

Each night, in the midst of God's delight in the souls of the righteous, He is reminded of the destruction of Jerusalem and He wails in mourning.

On God's wailing, see BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rav: "The night consists of three watches, and at each watch the blessed Holy One sits and roars like a lion, saying: 'Woe to the children on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burned My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world!'" See *Zohar* 3:17a, 74b; *ZḤ* 47c, 77b (*MhN*, *Rut*).

The number of firmaments (390) is equal to the numerical value of the word שמים (*shamayim*), "heaven." The word "dismay" renders ערטירו (*artiru*), which is apparently based playfully on the root ערער (*ʿrʿr*), "to undermine, upset, demolish." See above, p. 140, n. 266. The word "screaming" renders קרקורא (*qirqura*), which derives from an ambiguous phrase in Isaiah 22:5: מקרקר קיר (*meqarqer qir*), *Kir shouted* [or: *shouting a shout; battering down a wall*]. See *Zohar* 3:228b. Psalms 137:5 reads: *If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither* [or: *forget its cunning*].

57. **Then from there He emerges...** God leaves the Garden of Eden and expresses His grief and rage. The cosmic Tree is disturbed, but then from within its canopy a soothing voice sounds.

Abraham lies buried in the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron, which according to the *Zohar* serves as an entrance to the Garden of Eden. When he hears his name (from the passage in Psalms), he awakens, and his *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* is stimulated.

The title "Abraham the Elder" is modeled on "Israel the Elder." On the latter, see below, note 601. On the former, see *Zohar* 2:110a, 189b; below at note 201. On the patriarchs' role since their burial in the Cave of Machpelah

(at the entrance to the Garden of Eden), see Vol. 7, p. 470, n. 357.

The phrase “are disturbed” renders בערטורא (*be-irtura*), “(are) in confusion, disturbance.” See the preceding note. The context in Psalms (105:8–10) reads: *He remembers His covenant forever—the word He ordained for a thousand generations—which He sealed with Abraham, and His vow to Isaac, and He set it for Jacob as a decree, for Israel an eternal covenant*.

58. **from the side of the south…** Associated with *Ḥesed*.

The phrase “prisoners of the King” means those confined to their sickbed. On sickness as being confined or imprisoned, see BT *Shabbat* 32a; *Zohar* 2:61a, 199a, 252a (*Heikh*); 3:233a, 305b–306a (*Tosefet*); *ZḤ* 53c. On “the prisoners of the king” finding relief in the morning, see below at note 71.

59. **One day I was walking in the desert…** Rabbi Abba recounts how he and Rabbi Yehudah of Acre discovered an ancient book in a cave. On the significance of the title “of Acre,” see the conclusion of this note.

The souls of the righteous were originally hidden away in the Divine Mind, each in its own image (or ethereal body). As God outlined the world, these souls were revealed, and afterward stored away in a celestial treasure-house. Having entered there, on the verge of being embodied on earth, they assumed individual names. The treasure-house continually yearns to receive more and more souls, just as Hell desires to receive more souls, who are purged in its fires.

The phrase “Will of Thought” alludes to the highest *sefirah, Keter*, also known as *Ratson* (Will). “Thought” itself can designate *Ḥokhmah*. See Vol. 1, p. 171, n. 506. On the soul’s ethereal body, see above, note 53.

The image of a treasure-house derives from Rashi’s commentary on a Talmudic passage (BT *Yevamot* 62a) in

which Rabbi Assi mentions a heavenly "body" containing all souls; Rashi refers to this body as אוצר (*otsar*), "a treasure-house." In the *Zohar* the treasure-house of unborn souls is located in the Garden of Eden or (as here) the heavenly Garden of Eden, though it is sometimes identified with *Shekhinah*.

See 3 Enoch 43:3; *Bahir* 126 (184); *Zohar* 1:28b (*TZ*), 119a, 181a; 2:95b, 142a, 157a, 161b, 174a, 253a (*Heikh*); 3:152a; *ZḤ* 10b–c (*MhN*), 60b, 69b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 93; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:179–80; 2:696, 701–2 (discussing this passage), 749–50; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 179–80, 226.

The verse in Proverbs reads: *The leech has two daughters—"Give! Give!"* In the biblical context, this saying refers to a greedy person or to someone constantly leeching off others. It may also be a warning that a greedy parent engenders greedy children. Anatomically, the leech has two suckers, one at each end, pictured in this verse as *two daughters*. In rabbinic sources, the *leech* represents Hell, whose forces (*daughters*) crave more and more wicked victims. See above, p. 242, n. 31.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Look, the former things have come to pass, and new things I am predicting* [or: *declaring, proclaiming, announcing*]; *before they sprout, I announce them to you*.

The conclusion of Rabbi Yehudah's full name—"of Acre"—also designates a third-to-fourth-century Palestinian *Amora*, Rabbi Abba of Acre. Note that here Rabbi Yehudah of Acre's traveling companion is Rabbi Abba!

More intriguingly, "of Acre" matches the name of the famous wandering kabbalist, Isaac ben Samuel of Acre, who lived a millennium later than Rabbi Abba of Acre. Isaac's city was the last major stronghold of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem; its conquest by the Mamluks in 1291 effectively marked the end of the Crusades in the Holy Land. Most of Acre's Jewish and Christian inhabitants

perished in the fighting and its aftermath or were sold into slavery; but Isaac managed to escape, journeying first to Italy and eventually arriving in Spain. There he met numerous kabbalists, including Moses de León. According to a fragment of Isaac's diary, when he asked De León about the real origins of the *Zohar*, his fellow kabbalist assured him that the ancient manuscript was real—and offered to show it to him. But before the two could meet again, Moses de León passed away.

In describing here how Rabbi Yehudah of Acre and Rabbi Abba find an ancient book in a cave, perhaps the author is alluding to Isaac of Acre's search for the *Zohar*. According to legend, the *Zohar* itself was composed or hidden in such a cave. This legend is based partly on the rabbinic tradition that Rabbi Shim'on together with his son, Rabbi El'azar, hid from the Roman authorities in a cave for thirteen years.

On Isaac of Acre's account of his meeting with Moses de León, see Scholem, "Ha-Im Ḥibber R. Mosheh di León et Sefer ha-Zohar?"; idem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 190–92; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:13–18; Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 3–4; Fishbane, *As Light Before Dawn*, 40–41; Liebes, "Shenat Petirato shel R. Mosheh di León"; and Arthur Green's remarks in Vol. 1, p. lv.

On the motif of finding writings in a cave, see *Zohar* 1:117b–118a; 2:13a–14a. On the *Zohar*'s being composed or hidden in a cave, see Azulai, *Or ha-Ḥammah*, intro; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:19; Huss, "Hofa'ato shel 'Sefer ha-Zohar,'" 528. On Rabbi Shim'on's hiding in a cave, see JT *Shevi'it* 9:1, 38d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 79:6; BT *Shabbat* 33b, *Sanhedrin* 98a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:16; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:8; *Midrash Tehillim* 17:13; *Zohar* 1:11a–b, 216b, 244b; *ZḤ* 59c–60a.

60. **until the time when it clothes them…** In physical bodies.

Due to Adam's sin, all of his descendants acquire physical bodies—rather than lustrous bodies of light, as God originally intended. See Vol. 6, p. 189, n. 238. On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, p. 8, n. 17.

61. **the Mighty Rock...** Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

The title טינרא תקיפא (*tinnara taqqifa*), "the mighty flint," derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Deuteronomy 8:15, which renders צור החלמיש (*tsur ha-ḥallamish*), *the flinty rock* (or *flint stone*), as *tinnara taqqifa*, "the mighty flint." See above, p. 261 at n. 48.

62. **In it...** In the book hidden in the cave.

The phrase "in another garment" refers to the ethereal body, which the soul will regain in Paradise. (See above, note 53.) Rabbi Abba wonders why the bones that Ezekiel described as coming to life (Ezekiel 37) did not attain such garments. He explains that these spiritual garments are formed by breezes wafting from the Garden of Eden, and the time had not yet come for those breezes to blow in the world. Consequently, God clothed those bones in physical flesh, "as they had existed" during their lifetime. Similarly, when the dead are revived at the end of days, they will be physically resurrected, although their new bodies will be cleansed of "the former filth" of sensual sinfulness.

63. **When a person departs from this world...** See *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:18: "Death is decreed upon all the righteous who spring from him [Adam]. They do not depart this life without first gazing upon the face of *Shekhinah* and reproving Adam, saying: 'You inflicted death upon us!' Adam responds: 'As for me, I possess only one sin; while in your case, every single one of you possesses more than four.'" See *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 39; *Zohar* 1:57b, 65b, 81a (*ST*), 127a.

64. **those three walls there...** Surrounding the Garden. Before these souls can enter the Garden, however, the angel Ye'azriel leads them briefly to Hell, where they

immerse themselves in the River of Fire to be purged of any sins.

On the three walls surrounding the Garden, see below at note 290; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 153–57; [idem?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 264–76 (131–33); Sachs Shmueli, "Seder Gan Eden," 238–43.

The name Ye'azriel consists of the root עזר (*'zr*), "help," and אל (*El*), "God." His role is described similarly in [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 266 (131). See also *Zohar* 2:91b; *ZḤ* 68c (*ShS*), 90b (*MhN, Rut*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 67–68.

On souls being cleansed in Hell (or the River of Fire), see *Zohar* 3:53a; above, pp. 30–31, n. 78; below at note 105; *ZḤ* 46d; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 373–74; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 54–55, 68–70; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 60 (74–75). On Dumah, who oversees Hell, see above, p. 243, n. 32.

65. **All members of the Academy...** The Heavenly Academy. (See above, note 54.) On the soul's "image," or ethereal body, see above, note 53.

66. **image of all images, color of all colors...** *Shekhinah*, who includes all the sefirotic images and colors, issuing from *Binah*. Any vision of Her cannot be contained in a single place; rather, an embroidered רקיעא (*reqi'a*), "sky, firmament, expanse," opens above the Garden, which is then filled with divine radiance.

As mentioned above (note 55), the title Beauty of *YHVH* derives from Psalm 27 and in the *Zohar* often alludes to *Binah*. Maimonides (in *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 8:4) lists Beauty of *YHVH* as one of the names of *olam ha-ba* (the world that is coming).

On *Shekhinah* as "image of all images," see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush Shir ha-Shirim*, 537; *Zohar* 1:13a, 19a; *ZḤ* 59a–c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 353; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 138; idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 58; Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 179;

Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1375, n. 63; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 50–51; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 306–17. The phrase derives from Ibn Ezra on Exodus 33:21.

On the *reqi'a* (expanse) above the Garden of Eden, see *Zohar* 2:130b, 136a, 209b, 212a–213a; *ZḤ* 82d, 90a–91b (both *MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 143–44, 153; [idem?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 270–74 (132–33).

67. **in that book…** That they found in the cave. (See above at note 59.)

This precious text is retrieved by "the one whose book that is." This phrase could refer to (the soul of) the owner, but more likely to that of the author, which again raises the intriguing question of the relation of this book to the *Zohar*. (See above, toward the end of note 59.)

The phrase "about the one whose book that is" can also be rendered: "To the one whose book that is, [it flew away, and he took it]." For various interpretations, see *Sullam*; Scholem, 6:3377; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The phrase "the one robed in a garment" renders מדא להההוא דלבישׁ (*le-ha-hu di-lvish madda*), "the one clothed in a garment." Here this likely alludes to the angel Gabriel, to whom is applied the biblical description לבוש בדים (*lavush baddim*), *clothed in linen*.

For the phrase *lavush baddim* (and its equivalents), see Ezekiel 9:2–3, 11; 10:2, 6–7; Daniel 10:5; 12:6–7. On Gabriel as *the man clothed in linen*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:5; BT *Yoma* 77a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *levush ha-baddim*; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 12; David Kimḥi on Ezekiel 10:7; *Zohar* 2:139a, 231a, 233a. Cf. Daniel 8:16; 9:21.

68. **does not wish it to be revealed…** Revealing the secrets of existence would expose, and encroach on, God's inner being.

69. **engaging in her…** Engaging in Torah as they are going, and thereby contacting *Shekhinah*.

On the importance of engaging in Torah while walking or traveling, see Deuteronomy 6:7; M *Avot* 3:7; BT *Eruvin* 54a, *Ta'anit* 10b, *Sotah* 49a; *Zohar* 1:7a, 58b–59a, 69b–70a, 76a, 87a, 115b, 157a, 164a, 230a–b, 242b; 2:13a, 32a, 95a, 138b, 155b, 188b, 215a, 232b; 3:25b, 52a, 80a, 87b, 261b, 268b–269a; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 111–20. On the link between studying Torah and encountering *Shekhinah*, see also M *Avot* 3:2, 6; BT *Berakhot* 6a.

On the jump in pagination (from 3:303b to 3:204a), see above, note 36.

70. ***O YHVH, in the morning…*** The morning alludes to the streaming light of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham, who *rose early in the morning*. This is an opportune moment to pray for kindness, flowing now abundantly.

See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 5: "The prayers of the righteous are heard in the morning. How do we know this about the morning of Abraham? As is said: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3)."

On Abraham, *Ḥesed*, and morning, see *Zohar* 1:182b, 189a, 203a–b, 247b; 2:38b, 81a, 110a, 170b; 3:22b, 36a, 64b, 233a, 242a.

The verse in Psalms reads: *O YHVH, in the morning You will hear* [or: *You hear*] *my voice, in the morning I will arrange it* [or: *I arrange it*] *before You and wait expectantly* [or: *and keep watch*]. The expression *I arrange it* can also be rendered *I present my case*.

71. **all those prisoners of the King find rest…** Those confined to their sickbed find relief.

Each morning emerges the archangel Raphael, appointed over healing (and whose name means "God healed"). The direction south symbolizes *Ḥesed*, from whom a spirit issues, conveying healing energy to Raphael. At this auspicious moment, sincere prayer can move God to halt the judicial proceedings in the Heavenly Court, thereby saving the sick person from further punishment or

suffering. On the phrase “prisoners of the King,” see above, note 58.

72. **seeks the worthiness of that person…** God searches for any merit accruing to that person, to tip the scales in his favor. Even if He finds none, God treats him generously as if he were מארי דתיובתא (*marei di-tyuvta*), “a master of *teshuvah*,” one engaged genuinely in turning back to God.

73. **the sound of birds is heard…** Apparently alluding to souls in the Garden of Eden. Soon, *Shekhinah* (the Doe of Dawn) appears, and then Raphael sets out to spread healing.

On souls as birds chirping in the Garden of Eden, see below at notes 291–92. The phrase Doe of Dawn appears in Psalms 22:1: *For the leader. On the doe of dawn. A song of David*. On *Shekhinah* as a doe (or the Doe of Dawn), see *Zohar* 1:4a; 2:7b, 8b, 10a–b, 36b, 46a, 52b, 56b, 119b (*RM*), 219b–220a; 3:13a, 21b, 25a–b, 68a, 249a–b; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 153–67.

The context in Psalms 104:16–17 reads: *The trees of YHVH drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon that He planted, where birds make their nest, the stork whose home is the junipers*.

74. **healing in his hands…** Meaning that Raphael heals by his own power or authority. Rather, he goes forth on a mission ordained by God—and so empowered, he frightens off the numerous demonic accusers who are in charge of all types of illness.

The clause “he extends” could also be rendered simply “extends,” with “the spirit” (rather than Raphael) as the subject. See *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

75. ***O YHVH, morning…*** Rabbi El’azar reads the verse hyperliterally: *O YHVH*, בקר (*boqer*), *morning*—which implies that the Psalmist is calling out to *Ḥesed*, “the Morning of Abraham.”

76. **why two *mornings*?...** Mentioned in this one verse: *O YHVH, morning* [or: *in the morning*] *You will hear my voice, morning* [or: *in the morning*] *I will arrange it before You and wait expectantly*. Rabbi El'azar explains that the first *morning* refers to *Ḥesed* (the Morning of Abraham), while the second refers to *Yesod* (the Morning of Joseph).

The full verse in Genesis describes the departure of Joseph's brothers from Egypt: *The morning was light* [or: *had just brightened*], *and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys. Targum Onqelos* translates הבקר אור (*ha-boqer or*), *the morning was light*, as צפרא נהר (*tsafra nehar*), "morning shone," and Rabbi El'azar plays on Aramaic נהר (*nehar*), "shone," and Hebrew נהר (*nahar*), "river," which symbolizes the streaming light of *Yesod*. Cf. *Zohar* 2:110a; 3:22b, 242a.

77. **I will prepare Your lamp to be immediately lit...** David the Psalmist is addressing *Yesod* (the Morning of Joseph), assuring Him that he will prepare His lamp, namely *Shekhinah*, with whom David is closely linked.

For several interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Psalms reads: *There will I make a horn sprout for David, I have readied a lamp for My anointed*.

78. **What is meant by *and wait expectantly*?...** How does this distinguish David from everyone else in the world —who all expectantly await God's kindness? The phrase "coming from afar" can allude to *Ḥokhmah*. See above, p. 157, n. 15.

79. **The concealed primordial light...** The intensity of the primordial light was unbearable, so God clothed it within another light, and so on, through the whole process of emanation and creation. Here, the primordial light can be identified with *Keter* or *Ḥokhmah*, which is clothed gradually by lower *sefirot* and then by lower worlds.

On the primordial light, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7 (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon): "With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, a

person could gaze and see from one end of the world to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the corruption of the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood, He hid it away from them, as is written: *The light of the wicked is withheld* (Job 38:15). Where did He hide it? In the Garden of Eden: *Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright in heart* (Psalms 97:11)."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:6; 41:3; BT *Ḥagigah* 12a; *Shemot Rabbah* 35:1; *Tanḥuma, Shemini*, 9; *Midrash Tehillim* 27:1; *Bahir* 97–98 (147), 106 (160), 131 (190); *Zohar* 1:1a, 7a, 21a, 30b, 31b–32a, 45b–46a, 47a, 59a, 121b (*MhN*), 131a, 203b; 2:35a, 78b, 127a–b, 147b, 148b–149a 166b–167a, 220b, 224b, 230a; 3:34a–b, 88a, 93a, 173b, 225b, 231b; *ZḤ* 1a (*MhN*), 15b (*MhN*), 85a–b (*MhN, Rut*).

On God clothing light within light, see *Zohar* 1:20a; *ZḤ* 76a (*MhN, Rut*). On this passage, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 125–26; 218, n. 238.

80. **Rungs extended...** The process continues until reaching *Yesod* (Morning of Joseph), who absorbs all the higher sefirotic lights.

81. **David came and arranged a covering...** David, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, covers *Yesod* (Morning of Joseph), shielding the world from *Yesod*'s intensity and transmitting sustenance in a measured way. Since David is intimately linked to *Shekhinah*, he plays Her role, offering to cover *Yesod*: *Morning,... I will overlay*.

The simple sense of ואצפה (*va-atsappeh*) is *and I will wait expectantly*, but here Rabbi El'azar construes it as *I will overlay*, based on the homonymous root צפה (*tsphh*), "to cover." The verse in Exodus describes the Ark in the Dwelling, which was covered with pure gold.

82. **If I set out on the way...** On this type of exclamation, see above, p. 114, n. 182.

83. **it alighted and was cooing in front of him** The Aramaic reads: שריאת וקא מצפצפת קמיה (*sheri'at ve-qa metsaftsefat*

qameih), which can also be rendered “it began cooing in front of him.”

84. **Go and tell him…** Namely, Rabbi El’azar’s father-in-law, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lekonya, who is soon mentioned by name. See above, note 36.

85. **It is very evil in my eye…** Rabbi El’azar is troubled by what he has learned from the dove—that is, how Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on will be saved only by another person serving as his substitute: a certain man filled with learning and good deeds who is fittingly named Yose.

According to rabbinic (and older) sources, once an evil or tragic act has been ordained, it must be executed—if not on the intended victim, then on a substitute. See Isaiah 43:3–4; Job 33:24; *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 10; *Bereshit Rabbah* 10:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:4; JT *Shabbat* 6:10, 8c; BT *Berakhot* 62b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:8; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:11; *Zohar* 1:114a, 174b; below at notes 157–67, 405; *Nitsotsei Zohar* on *Zohar* 3:200b, n. 4.

On the image of the pomegranate, see BT *Berakhot* 57a: “*Like a slice of pomegranate is* רקתך (*raqatekh*), *your forehead* (Song of Songs 4:3)….Even ריקנין (*reiqanin*), the empty ones, among you [i.e., among Israel] are as full of *mitsvot* as a pomegranate [is full of seeds].” See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:3.

86. **For this you exist…** To convey bad news, in this case the death of Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on. But Rabbi El’azar already knows what is happening to his father-in-law. On the raven and the dove, cf. Genesis 8:7–12.

87. **Rabbi Yose of Peki’in…** Whose death serves as a substitute for Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on. See above, note 85.

Peki’in is the village in Upper Galilee where, according to tradition, Rabbi Shim’on together with his son, Rabbi El’azar, hid from the Romans authorities in a cave for thirteen years. See above, end of note 59.

88. **these Companions entered there** That is, they entered the house of Rabbi Yose of Peki'in.

89. **he would not let anyone approach his bed…** That is, his father's bed, where Rabbi Yose lay dead. The significance of the phrase "mouth clinging to mouth" will be clarified below.

90. ***If a bird's nest happens to be before you…*** The passage concludes: *so that it may go well with you and you will prolong your days*.

91. **You should have taken us…** And spared their father, just as the Torah commands: *Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 76:6; cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:11 (and parallels).

92. **It is written אם (*em*), *mother*…** Since the verse reads: *you shall not take the mother together with the children*, God could claim that this does not pertain to the death of the children's father. However, the boy insists that Rabbi Yose of Peki'in was like father and mother to them. How can his death be justified?

93. ***and the heart of kings, unfathomable*** Referring here to the divine heart, whose ways are unknowable and should not be questioned.

94. **separated them…** Separating Rabbi El'azar and his Companions from the deceased Rabbi Yose of Peki'in and his son.

95. **the words of this little kid…** This little "goat." The boy's fervent prayer has altered the divine decree, and his father has been revived. Now a substitute for Rabbi Yose of Peki'in must be provided to the Angel of Death. Whereas normally one person would suffice, Rabbi Yose's virtue and merit are so extreme that thirteen people are required to replace him.

The revived father will live for another twenty-two years, long enough to teach his little son the Torah

(composed of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet).

On the theme of the substitute, see above, note 85. On twenty-two years being added to someone's life, see BT *Bava Batra* 11a. A similar story, describing the revival of Rabbi Yitsḥak, appears in *Zohar* 1:217b–218b. See Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 150.

96. **that child was clinging mouth-to-mouth** See the description (in 2 Kings 4:34) of the revival of the son of the Shunammite woman by the prophet Elisha: *He climbed up* [on the bed] *and lay over the child and put his mouth over his mouth, his eyes over his eyes, and his palms upon his palms; he stretched out over him, and child's flesh grew warm*.

97. **eye-to-eye** See the preceding note.

98. **his tears and his words…** On the power of tears, see BT *Berakhot* 32b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar (son of Shammua): "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the gates of prayer have been locked.... Yet even though the gates of prayer are locked, the gates of tears are not, as is said: *Hear my prayer, O* YHVH; *give ear to my cry; do not keep silent at my tears!*"

99. **they didn't tell him immediately…** That his father had come back to life, so as not to shock him.

The wording "that Rabbi Yose" means Rabbi Yose of Peki'in, as distinguished from Rabbi El'azar's father-in-law, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on. On innovations of Torah, see above, p. 145, n. 282; below, notes 316, 440.

100. **from that world I am not permitted to reveal…** For the next twelve years, Rabbi Yose of Peki'in is not allowed to reveal anything that he just saw in the heavenly world while he lay briefly dead. But one detail he does divulge: As soon as his little son uttered the biblical command *you shall not take the mother together with the children*, and challenged God's judgment, numerous souls of the righteous (occupying 300,000 benches in the

Heavenly Academy) pleaded for divine compassion on the boy's father. They offered themselves as surety for Rabbi Yose of Peki'in, guaranteeing that he would live virtuously. On the theme of surety for one who is being saved from death, see above, p. 261, n. 46. Cf. above, note 85.

101. **those words were pleasing to Him...** The words of Rabbi Yose of Peki'in's son, offering his life in place of his father.

An angel argued before God that the merit of Rabbi Yose's Torah learning and the merit of his son's selfless devotion should suffice, convincing God to bring the father back to life. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 2:113b.

102. **Thirteen people...** Who will die in place of Rabbi Yose of Peki'in. (See above, note 95.) Twenty-two years later, the Angel of Death will return to take Rabbi Yose, because there is no such thing as permanent surety postponing death forever.

The clause "pledges that were in his hands return to him" apparently means that Rabbi Yose, who was originally destined to be taken right now by the Angel of Death, will inevitably be returned to that angel. Alternatively, it could mean "pledges that were in His hands return to Him," referring to the return of the soul to God. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 145; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the twenty-two years, see above, note 95.

103. ***YHVH puts to death and brings to life...*** Rabbi Yose wonders how the verse can say *YHVH puts to death*, since the name *YHVH* represents Compassion and animates all of existence. One might suppose that this verse refers to when He departs from someone, enabling demonic accusers to attack that person fatally.

On the association of *YHVH* with Compassion, see above, p. 240, n. 21. The verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH puts to death and brings to life* [or: *and grants life*; *keeps alive*].

104. **Not so!…** Rather, *YHVH* actively *puts to death* the body, which is משיכו (*meshikhu*), "a flow (or emanation)," of the demonic Other Side. In its final moment, the physical body sees *Shekhinah*, and the person immediately dies. Simultaneously, *He brings to life* the soul, preparing it for bliss.

On the notion that the body derives from the demonic Other Side, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:764–65. Cf. above, p. 121, n. 204.

On seeing the Divine Presence at the moment of death, see *Sifra, Nedavah* 2:12, 4a, in the name of Rabbi Dosa: "Scripture states: *No human can see Me and live* (Exodus 33:20). In their lifetime they do not see, but in their death they do!"

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 103; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 39; *Ḥibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 258; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:150; *Kallah Rabbati* 3:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 22:32; 103:3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:22; 19:18; *Zohar* 1:65b, 79a, 98a (*MhN*), 99a (*ST*), 218b, 226a, 245a; 2:263a (*Heikh*); 3:53a, 88b, 126b, 147a, 260b, 287b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 10a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 393.

105. ***brings down to Sheol and raises up…*** Momentarily, God immerses the soul in the fire of Hell (described here as *Sheol*), purging it. See above, note 64.

106. **As for me, Companions…** Rabbi Yose of Peki'in recounts his death and revival.

The phrase "those words" refers to the son's quotation and challenging application of the verse *If a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way*…. See above at notes 90–92. The "judgment" referred to is the decision to restore Rabbi Yose's life and grant him twenty-two additional years. See above at note 95.

107. **I should occupy myself with what I have seen…** I should engage only in spiritual pursuits.

108. ***YHVH chastised me severely…*** In this verse David the Psalmist recalls how he had to flee from King Saul, yet also how God saved him from death.

In the concluding sentence, Rabbi Yose of Peki'in refers to his own experience of being delivered from death—and resolves to live virtuously and honorably.

On the theme of entering the afterlife without shame, see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 1; *Midrash Mishlei* 10; *Zohar* 2:123b; 3:46a, 144a (*IR*), 196b, 287b (*IZ*), 291a–b (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 2c (*SO*), 8d (*MhN*), 70d (*ShS*). Cf. *Zohar* 1:4a, 221b–222a; 2:134b.

109. ***Our father died in the desert…*** Namely, Zelophehad son of Hepher, who died without sons and whose five daughters then approached Moses, asking that their father's inheritance be granted to them. See Numbers 27:1–11.

In the Masoretic text, above the word אבינו (*avinu*), *our father*, appears a tonal accent (or cantillation sign) known as *zarqa*, which extends the sound of the word. When orphaned children cry out "Our father," their pain is palpable.

On the *zarqa* above the word *avinu*, see *TZ* 21, 59b; *ZḤ* 110a (*Tiq*); Penkower, *Al Zeman Ḥibburam shel Sefer ha-Zohar ve-Sefer ha-Bahir*, 117–37. Cf. above, pp. 293–94, n. 141.

The full verse in Numbers 27, spoken by the daughters of Zelophehad, reads: *Our father died in the desert, and he was not part of the group that banded together against YHVH along with Korah's group; rather, for his own sin he died, and he had no sons*.

110. **did others not die in the desert…** How does this distinguish Zelophehad from thousands of other Israelites who met a similar fate? According to one rabbinic tradition, Zelophehad is identified with the anonymous Israelite who was discovered gathering wood on the Sabbath. See Numbers 15:32–36; above, pp. 7–8, n. 17.

The myriads of Israelites who died in the wilderness included not only the group assembled around Korah but, in fact, the entire generation of Israelites above the age of twenty, who were condemned to perish in the desert on account of the negative report delivered by the tribal spies who scouted out the Land.

"Before the Torah was given" refers to early instances of the Israelites grumbling against God, soon after they crossed the Red Sea. According to rabbinic tradition, the sin of the Golden Calf was initiated not by the Israelites but rather by the mixed multitude, the hordes who accompanied them out of Egypt. Here they are referred to as "those deceivers of the world," after whom many of the Israelites were then drawn. See Exodus 12:38; Vol. 6, pp. 77–78, n. 64.

"Confused" renders ערטראין (*artira'in*), which is apparently based playfully on the root ערער (*'r'r*), "to undermine, upset, demolish." The reading *artira'in* follows V18 and Ibn Gaon, *Baddei ha-Aron*, 132 (67a). Other witnesses read ערטילאין (*artila'in*), "naked," which would imply that people are "lacking" the correct understanding of this matter. See above, p. 111, n. 172; p. 140, n. 266; Scholem.

111. **he died במדבר (*ba-midbar*)...** The simple sense of the word, of course, is *in the desert*. But the child plays on the word מדבר (*midbar*), *desert*, and its rare homonym: *midbar*, "speech, mouth" (as in Song of Songs 4:3). Zelophehad was so prominent among the descendants of Joseph (constituted by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) that he would have been made a chieftain, but he ruined his chances by "speaking" slanderously against Moses. Thus, *Our father died* במדבר (*ba-midbar*), *on account of speech*.

The context in Numbers (21:5–6) reads: *The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the desert? For there is no bread and there is no water, and our throat* [or: *very self*] *loathes the wretched bread." And YHVH sent against the people the*

fiery serpents, and they bit the people, וימת עם רב מישראל (*va-yamot am rav mi-yisra'el*) *and many people of Israel died*.

Here the child interprets עם רב (*am rav*), *many people*, as alluding to Zelophehad, who was עם הארץ (*am ha-arets*), "ignorant of Torah," and yet *rav*, "master," of his clan. So now the clause *va-yamot am rav mi-yisra'el* means: *an ignorant master of Israel died*.

The term *am ha-arets* means literally "people of the land, rural population." By extension, it designates one who is coarse, unrefined, illiterate, ignorant of the Torah, and unobservant of certain ritual practices.

112. **they thought that Moses harbored hatred...** Zelophehad's daughters feared that Moses would spitefully rule against them, so they arranged their case before the entire assembly of Israel, so that Moses would not skew the judgment.

The clause "they suspected him" renders קניאו קנאה מניה (*qanni'u qin'ah minneih*), "they were jealous of him." On the link between suspicion and jealousy, see Numbers 5:14.

113. **But they did not know...** That Moses was extremely humble and did not bear grudges. The verse in Numbers begins: *And the man Moses was very humble*.

114. **Moses removed himself from the case...** Recusing himself because he had once been slandered by Zelophehad.

According to the simple sense of the verse in Numbers, *Moses brought forward their case before YHVH* because he didn't know how to respond to Zelophehad's daughters plea to receive their father's inheritance. See above, p. 8, n. 18.

115. **I return to earlier matters...** To what he was told on his father's sickbed about the verse in Numbers, the plea of Zelophehad's daughters: *Our father died in the desert....*

The cantillation sign *zarqa* above the word אבינו (*avinu*), *our father*, is shaped like a snake. This symbolizes the demonic serpent and the sin of slander (associated with the

serpent). Due to Zelophehad's slanderous speech against Moses, the serpent was hanging on his neck.

On the serpent's slander, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:4, in the name of Rabbi Levi: "He [the serpent] began speaking slander against his Creator, saying, 'He ate of this tree and created the world. And He told you, "*You shall not eat from it*" (Genesis 3:3), so that you would not create other worlds.' For everyone hates his fellow artisan." See above, p. 43, n. 121.

On the *zarqa*, see above, note 109. On the multivalent meaning of במדבר (*ba-midbar*), see above, note 111.

116. **and you, Father, returned to the world by speech** That is, by the child's arguing with God. See above at notes 90–95.

117. **what is meant by *rather*, בחטאו (*ve-ḥet'o*), *for his own sin, he died?*** The continuation of the daughters' plea: *Our father died in the desert, and he was not part of the group that banded together against YHVH; rather, for his own sin he died*….

118. **one word is enough for them…** This could mean: "I told them one of my new Torah interpretations, and that's enough." But, in the context of the full paragraph, the child may be saying: "It would be sufficient for Scripture to employ a single word: מת (*met*), *he died*. Why does the verse add בחטאו (*ve-het'o*), *for his own sin*?"

He explains that the serpentine shape of the tonal accent *zarqa* above the word אבינו (*avinu*), *our father*, represents an extension of that accent's sound. This extension is produced בחטאו (*ve-ḥet'o*), which the child construes as: *by his sin*—namely by the sinful flow (or emanation) of the serpent. The serpent's sin is slander, uttered by the mouth; and for slandering Moses, Zelophehad died. Thus, *by his sin he died—for* the serpent's *sin* Zelophehad *died*.

On the *zarqa*, see above, notes 109, 115. On the serpent's slander see above, note 115. For various

interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

119. **his potent breast…** תוקפיה (*Tuqpeih*). On this term, see below, note 418.

120. **my spirit is still unsettled** From the trauma of his father's death and revival.

121. **for five years have not yet come upon him** And at such a young age, he is vulnerable to the evil eye. On the tender age of five, see *Zohar* 3:272a (*RM*).

122. ***Five years without plowing and harvest…*** The verse is spoken by Joseph to his brothers as soon as he reveals himself to them. It reads in full: *Two years now there has been famine in the midst of the land, and there are still five years without plowing and harvest*.

Here Rabbi El'azar applies the description *five years without… harvest* to the little boy, implying that he has survived so far without being "harvested" by death, and then he blesses Rabbi Yose that he may never have to witness and undergo his child's death. On bereavement as "harvesting," see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 9b; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 13.

123. **Let us stay here for seven days…** When the soul leaves the body at death, she roams around naked for seven days.

According BT *Shabbat* 152a, the soul mourns over the body for seven days. (See Vol. 5, p. 301, n. 308.) According to *Zohar* 3:43b, for the first seven days of the soul's existence within a newborn male, she is still unsettled in the body.

The word "naked" renders ערטיראה (*artira'ah*), on which see above, note 110; p. 99, n. 140; p. 111, n. 172; Scholem.

124. ***You shall surely open your hand…*** According to Exodus 22:24: *If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, do not be like a creditor to him, do not impose interest on him*. On the phrase *to the poor among you*, a midrashic tradition comments: "If your own poor [namely

those who are your relatives] and the poor of your city [stand before you in need], your own take precedence over the poor of your city."

Here Rabbi Abba links the precedence of "your own poor" to the verse in Deuteronomy about *your poor*. The formula "we have already learned" apparently alludes to Maimonides, who writes in *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 7:13: "A poor person who is one's relative takes precedence over anyone; the poor of one's house take precedence over the poor of one's city... as is said: *to your brother, to your poor, and to your pauper in your land*."

Rabbi Abba advises Rabbi El'azar that they should hurry to visit Rabbi El'azar's "own poor," namely his father-in-law, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya, who is lying on his sickbed. See above, notes 36, 84.

On the midrashic reading of *the poor among you*, see *Mekhilta, Kaspa* 19; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 71a; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 15. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 116. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For the pauper will not cease from the midst of the land. Therefore I command you, saying, "You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor, and to your pauper in your land*."

125. **we will enter here...** Again. Rabbi El'azar predicts that they will encounter more instances of the revival of the dead, in addition to that of Rabbi Yose of Peki'in, which they just witnessed. See above at note 95.

126. **the old man, master of the generation...** Namely, Rabbi El'azar's father, Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

The word "habitation" renders ישובא (*yishuva*), "habitation," playing on Hebrew ישיבה (*yeshivah*), "academy." On the two Academies, see above, p. 67, n. 43. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

127. **For eleven things, leprous plagues come upon people...** Rabbi Abba transmits a rabbinic teaching that appears in *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 4, and *Tanḥuma* (Buber),

Metsora 10. On that passage, see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1; 17:3; BT *Arakhin* 16a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 7:5.

The expression "leprous plagues" renders נגעין (*nig'in*), "plagues, afflictions," referring here to צרעת (*tsara'at*), "leprosy" (or more precisely, "a scaly skin disease"). In the following, for the sake of simplicity, I render *tsara'at* as "leprosy." On the term *tsara'at*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774–76, 816–26.

The term "sexual licentiousness" renders גלוי עריות (*gillui arayot*), literally "exposing nakedness," referring to illicit sexual intercourse and incest.

On evil speech or slander ("the evil tongue") causing *tsara'at* see Vol. 7, pp. 289–90, n. 106. The verse in Proverbs (part of a list of immoral examples) reads: *A lying witness who breathes out deceits, and one fomenting strife among brothers*.

128. **in our Mishnah...** Referring to the rabbinic sources mentioned at the beginning of the preceding note.

The verse in Exodus describes Moses witnessing the Israelites as they worship the Golden Calf in frenzy: *Moses saw the people, that it was* פרוע (*pharu'a*), *loose* [or: *out of control*], *for Aaron had let them loose* [or: *let them get out of control*], *to ridicule* [or: *disgrace*] *among their adversaries*. By verbal analogy, Rabbi Abba (following his midrashic source) links this act of idolatry with leprosy, since the verse in Leviticus also uses the word *pharu'a*: *As for the person stricken with leprosy* [or: *the scaly affliction*], *his clothes shall be tom and his hair pharu'a, disheveled, and his moustache he shall cover, and he shall call out, "Impure! Impure!"*

Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, "our Mishnah" alludes to a secret, mystical Mishnah apparently known only in the *Zohar*'s circle. See below, pp. 747–48, n. 48.

129. **And about cursing the Name...** The Philistine giant Goliath had taunted both David and God (1 Samuel 17:43, 45), and Rabbi Abba (following his midrashic source)

demonstrates by verbal analogy that Goliath was struck with leprosy.

In addition to the sources mentioned at the beginning of note 127, see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 21:2; *Midrash Shemu'el* 21:3.

The full verse in Samuel (spoken by David) reads: *This day shall YHVH give you over into my hand and I will strike you down and take off your head, and I will give your corpse and the corpses of the Philistine camp this day to the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth, and all the earth shall know that Israel has a God!* This is the reading of the Septuagint; the Masoretic text reads: *and I will give the corpses of the Philistine camp*, etc., omitting *your corpse*.

The full verse in Leviticus (describing the priestly inspection of the leper) reads: *The priest shall see him on the seventh day, and look, if the affliction has retained its color, if the affliction has not spread in the skin, the priest shall confine him* [or: *quarantine him*] *another seven days*.

130. **This matter is not settled...** How did Goliath contract leprosy?

131. **This Philistine was close to the lineage of Ruth...** David's great-grandmother.

Ruth and Orpah were married to the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi. According to midrashic tradition, Ruth and Orpah were sisters. Another tradition relates that Orpah gave birth to four giants, one of whom was Goliath, so he was "close to the lineage of (his aunt) Ruth."

It is also told of Orpah that she was raped by a hundred men. Rabbi El'azar links this tragedy with the phrase ממערות (*mi-me'arot*), *from the caves of, the Philistines*, since they "made [Goliath's] mother like a cave."

When David saw Goliath delivering curses, he gazed at him with an evil eye, thereby inflicting him with leprosy. Similarly, later in David's career he inflicted leprosy on Joab, his nephew and the commander in chief of his army.

The full verse in Samuel reads: *As he was speaking with them, look, the champion was coming up* ממערכות (*mi-ma'arekhot*), *from the lines of, the Philistines—Goliath the Philistine from Gath was his name—and he spoke words to the same effect* [or: *the same words as before*], *and David heard*. The phrase *to the same effect* refers to Goliath's earlier taunting of the Israelites, as described previously in the chapter (1 Samuel 17:8–11).

In the Masoretic text, the word ממערכות (*mi-ma'arekhot*), *from the lines of*, is actually written ממערות (*mi-me'arot*), *from the caves of*, though it is read *mi-ma'arekhot*. For midrashic interpretations of *mi-me'arot* similar to Rabbi El'azar's, see BT *Sotah* 42b; *Rut Rabbah* 2:20; *Midrash Shemu'el* 20:4; *Midrash Ḥaserot vi-Yterot*, 145 (*Battei Midrashot* 2:292); *Minḥat Shai* on 1 Samuel 17:23. Cf. JT *Yevamot* 4:2, 5c.

On Ruth and Orpah as sisters (daughters of King Eglon of Moab), see *Rut Rabbah* 2:9. On Orpah as mother of Goliath, see BT *Sotah* 42b; *Rut Rabbah* 2:20; *Midrash Shemu'el* 20:4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiggash* 8.

The full verse in 2 Samuel reads: *May the blood guilt come down on the head of Joab and all his father's house, and may there never lack in the house of Joab a sufferer of discharge and a leper* [or: *running sores on his skin*], *and a man clutching the woman's spindle, and one falling by the sword and one wanting for bread!* The phrase *a sufferer of discharge* refers to a man suffering from a diseased discharge from his penis.

132. ***the stone sank into his forehead…*** The full verse describes how David slew Goliath: *He reached his hand into the pouch and took from there a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, and the stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground*.

133. **As for the wicked Balaam…** The eyes of Balaam and David were wholly opposite. David's eye reflected all colors, since he is linked with *Shekhinah*, who includes all the sefirotic colors.

On David's eyes, see 1 Samuel 16:12: *He was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on*. On the colors of David's eye(s), see *Zohar* 2:73a (*RR*).

On Balaam's "evil eye" (which can also mean "selfishness, ill-will, envy"), see M *Avot* 5:19; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 45; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:10; *Zohar* 1:68b; 3:63b, 211b. Cf. *Zohar* 2:237a. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Those who fear You see me and rejoice, for I hope in Your word*.

134. **About sexual licentiousness…** How does Scripture demonstrate that sexual licentiousness is punished by leprosy?

The verse in Isaiah describes the punishment of *the daughters of Zion*, who had committed sexual immorality. God will afflict their *pates with scabs*, and the word *scab* appears in Leviticus in a list of features of leprosy and other skin diseases.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *My Lord will bare the pates of the daughters of Zion* [or: *afflict the pates of the daughters of Zion with scabs*], *YHVH will uncover their brows* [or: *pudenda*]. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *for swelling, for scab, and for shiny spot*.

135. **About stealing…** How does Scripture demonstrate that theft is punished by leprosy?

The verse in Zechariah is from a vision the prophet had of a flying scroll containing a curse against anyone who had stolen or sworn falsely. It reads in full: *I have sent it forth—declares YHVH of Hosts—and it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name, and it shall lodge inside his house and consume it, and its timbers and its stones*.

The verse in Leviticus describes what must be done to a house infected with צרעת (*tsara'at*); it reads in full: *The house shall be demolished—its stones and its timbers and all of the mortar of the house—and taken outside the town to an impure place*. In this context, *tsara'at* means "fungus, mold,"

but Rabbi El'azar (following his midrashic source) equates it with the *tsara'at* that strikes humans: leprosy (or scaly affliction).

136. **About the evil tongue…** How does Scripture demonstrate that slander is punished by leprosy? By relating the episode of Miriam, who slandered her brother Moses (for taking a Cushite wife) and was immediately afflicted with this dread disease.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *The cloud moved away from the tent, and, look, Miriam was* מצורעת (*metsora'at*), *covered with scales* [or: *stricken with leprosy*], *as white as snow! Aaron turned to Miriam, and, look, she was metsora'at, covered with scales*.

137. **About false testimony…** How does Scripture demonstrate that false testimony is punished by leprosy? When Israel worshiped the Golden Calf, they testified falsely, claiming that the calf was God. According to Rabbi El'azar's midrashic source, the guilty Israelites were punished by leprosy.

Following his midrashic source, Rabbi El'azar provides a slight verbal analogy. Exodus 32:17 reads in full: *Joshua heard the sound of the people as it shouted, and he said to Moses, 'A sound of war in the camp!'* A similar phrase—*from the camp*—appears in the verse from Numbers describing the expulsion of the leper, and this verbal link is enough to demonstrate that the Israelites who worshiped the calf were afflicted with leprosy.

The full verse in Exodus (describing how Aaron fashioned the calf) reads: *He took from their hand and he fashioned it with a graving tool* [or: *and he fashioned it in a mold*; *and he wrapped it in a bag*] *and made it into a molten calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"*

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Command the Children of Israel that they should expel from the camp anyone with a scaly affliction* [or: *leprosy*] *and anyone with*

a bodily discharge [or: *a genital flux*] *and anyone defiled by contact with a corpse*.

138. **About a judge who perverts justice…** How does Scripture demonstrate that such a judge is punished by leprosy? Isaiah condemns these judges because they *have rejected the Torah of YHVH*. His use of the word פרחם (*pirḥam*), *their blossom*, evokes the description of leprosy in Leviticus: ואם פרוח תפרח הצרעת (*Ve-im paroaḥ tifraḥ ha-tsara'at*), *If the leprosy breaks out*.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Assuredly, as a tongue of fire consumes straw, and hay enflamed shrivels, their root shall become rot, and their blossom shall blow away like dust; for they have rejected the teaching of* [or: *the Torah of*] *YHVH of Hosts, and the word of the Holy One of Israel have they spurned*. The full verse in Leviticus reads: הצרעת ואם פרוח תפרח (*Ve-im paroaḥ tifraḥ ha-tsara'at*), *If the scales break out* [or: *if the leprosy breaks out*], *in the skin, and the scales cover all the skin of the afflicted person from head to foot, wherever the priest's eyes can see*. See below, note 266.

139. **About encroaching on the boundary of one's neighbor…** How does Scripture demonstrate that such encroachment is punished by leprosy? King Uzziah of Judea encroached on the domain of priesthood, as described several verses earlier in the same biblical chapter: *He grew so arrogant he acted corruptly: he trespassed against his God by entering the Temple of YHVH to offer incense on the incense altar* (2 Chronicles 26:16). The priests confronted the king, who then raged against them. Immediately, he was attacked by leprosy, as described in v. 19: *Uzziah raged, and in his hand was a censer for burning incense; and as he raged against the priests, scales* [or: *leprosy*] *rose up* [or: *broke out*] *on his forehead in front of the priests in the House of YHVH beside the incense altar*.

140. **About *fomenting strife among brothers…*** How does Scripture demonstrate that provoking conflict is punished by leprosy? When Pharaoh seized Abram's wife

Sarai (having been told by Abram that she was his sister), he was afflicted by leprosy. This is indicated by the word נגעים (*nega'im*), *plagues*, which implies leprosy.

According to Rabbi El'azar, Pharaoh was punished by leprosy because "he fomented strife between Abraham and Sarah." This could refer simply to their painful separation, or it might imply that Sarah complained to her husband and became embittered toward him because he had facilitated her abduction by presenting her as his sister. See *Maharzu* on *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1 (drawing on *Bereshit Rabbah* 40(41):2); *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The clause "for he fomented strife between Abraham and Sarah" derives from *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1. For the context in Proverbs, see above, note 127.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH afflicted Pharaoh and his household with terrible* נגעים (*nega'im*), *plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife*. On *nega'im* as leprosy, see above, note 127.

141. **how do we know?...** Namely, that the evil eye causes leprosy. The answer is as Rabbi El'azar explained above (at note 131): "Wherever David was gazing with an evil eye, all types of leprosy flowed from his eye."

According to most of the rabbinic sources mentioned above (in note 127), the evil eye is punished by leprosy. *Matoq mi-Devash* suggests that here Rabbi El'azar is implying that Balaam was punished so for gazing upon Israel with the evil eye.

In the concluding sentence, "all of them" refers to all eleven negative traits listed above (at note 127), most of which Rabbi El'azar soon enumerates.

142. ***at Pethor, which is on the River...*** The context in Numbers (22:5–6) reads: *He* [namely Balak] *sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the River* [or: *the Euphrates*], *in his people's land* [or: *in the land of the sons of his people; in the land of the Ammonites*], *to invite him, saying, "Look, a people has come*

out of Egypt. Look, it has covered the eye of the land and it is encamped opposite me. Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed."

Here Rabbi El'azar associates *the River* with the Divine River, *Yesod*, nourishing Israel. Balaam tried to curse this river with his masterful evil eye.

The clause "he came with that *petorah*" likely alludes to the midrashic association between פתורה (*petorah*), *at Pethor*, and the Aramaic term פתורא (*petora*), "table." In order to conjure demonic forces against Israel, Balaam set פתורא (*petora*), "a table," for them and performed certain rites. See above, note 5. For various interpretations of this clause, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:193b.

143. ***Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam's word…*** The context in Numbers (31:15–16) refers to the Midianite women who had been captured by the Israelites: *Moses said to them* [namely the Israelite warriors], "*You have spared every female! Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam's word, led the Children of Israel to betray YHVH in the affair of Peor, and there was a plague among YHVH's community*."

Peor was the scene of the tragic event at Israel's last stop on their trek through the desert, where many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites died in a plague, in addition to those who were slain by the Israelite officers. Since Balaam advised the Midianites (and/or the Moabites) to seduce the Israelites, he obviously was imbued with the trait of sexual licentiousness.

On Balaam's wicked advice, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 157; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 24:14, 25; JT *Sanhedrin*

10:2, 28d; BT *Sanhedrin* 106a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 14–15, 18, *Mattot* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 23–24, 27, *Mattot* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20–21, 23; below, note 237.

144. **False testimony…** Balaam possessed this trait too, as demonstrated by his claim to know *the knowledge of the Most High*—when his own donkey knew more than he did.

Rabbi El'azar's rhetorical question—"how could he have known…?"—is derived from the Talmud. See BT *Berakhot* 7a, quoted below, note 180. Cf. below at notes 233–35. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of El and knows the knowledge of Elyon* (*the Most High*). *A vision of Shaddai he beholds, falling with eyes uncovered*.

145. **He perverted justice…** When he participated in the council of the Moabites as they were discussing the approach of the Israelites. Instead of defending the Israelites, he advised how to seduce them to idolatry.

See above, note 143. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Now, I am about to go to my people. Let me counsel you what this people will do to your people in days to come*.

146. **He encroached on a domain that was not his…** By offering sacrifices to God—a ritual with cosmic import, and reserved for Israel alone.

The verse in Numbers 23:4 reads in full: ויקר אלהים (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon* [or: *chanced to appear to; allowed Himself to be encountered by*] *Balaam, and he said to Him, "The seven altars I have arrayed, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar."*

147. ***Fomenting strife among brothers…*** When Israel was seduced to commit idolatry at Peor, God's wrath flared against them, ruining the intimacy between God and His people.

148. **Cursing the Name…** Because he tried to curse *Shekhinah*, who represents the Divine Name.

The full verse in Numbers (recording Balaam's words) reads: *He said to Balak, "Station yourself here by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I myself may be happened upon* [or: *and I myself will be encountered; and I myself will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*].

Here Rabbi El'azar quotes the clause ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder*, in order to allude to a different reading: אעקר לכה ואנכי (*ve-anokhi e'eqor le-khoh*), "I myself will uproot *Koh*," that is, "I will eliminate *Shekhinah*," who is known as כה (*Koh*).

See *Zohar* 3:193b, 198a, 199a, 210b–211a. On *Koh* (here, yonder, thus) as a name of *Shekhinah*, see also *Zohar* 1:90b, 96a, 152b, 174b; 2:23b, 37b, 79b, 139b; 3:145b–146a, 147a, 148a, 200a, 211b, 264b, 267a, 269a–b; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 12a–13a.

149. **All of them were found in him…** All eleven negative traits (listed above at note 127).

Balaam directed his evil eye against *Yesod*, the Divine River, sustaining Israel. (See above at note 142.) He advised Balak to seduce the Israelites to commit idolatry. On Balaam's evil eye, see above, note 133.

150. ***In the land of the sons of his people…*** Rabbi El'azar returns to the verse he began interpreting above (at note 142): *He* [namely Balak] *sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the River, in the land of the sons of his people to invite him, saying, "Look, a people has come out of Egypt. Look, it has covered the eye of the land and it is encamped opposite me."*

Obviously, Balaam lived *in the land of the sons of his people*; but Scripture is alluding to a demonic *land*, to which Balaam and all his kinsfolk clung.

On the jump in pagination (from 3:206b to 3:304a), see above, note 36. As mentioned there, much of the material in 3:304a–306a appears also in *ZḤ* 53d–55b, and part of it in 3:299a–b.

151. ***a people has come out of Egypt…*** According to Rabbi El'azar, Balak's wording is intended to reassure Balaam that in order to invoke curses upon Israel, there is no need to mention their entire genealogy (as sorcerers normally do). Balaam can simply refer to them as *a people*, since this is how God refers to them, as in the famous proclamation *Let My people go*. The concluding phrase, "every time," refers to the various verses in which this proclamation appears (Exodus 5:1; 7:16, 26; 9:1, 13).

"Lineage" renders פיפוסין (*piphosin*), which derives from the rabbinic terms אפופסין (*apophesin*) and אפופסיס (*apophesis*), based on Greek *apophasis*, "sentence, verdict." Here, *piphosin* means "list, record, lineage." For the full verse in Numbers, see the preceding note.

152. **when you took counsel against them with Pharaoh…** Balak reminds Balaam that he counseled Pharaoh on how to deal with the Israelites. By telling Balaam *Look, a people has come out of Egypt*, Balak alludes to Pharaoh's statement, which begins similarly: *Look, the people of the sons of Israel is more numerous and vast than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them* (Exodus 1:9–10).

By saying *Look, a people has come out of Egypt*, Balak also implies that Israel came out on their own, with no divine assistance; so they are vulnerable to Balaam's curses.

On Balaam as one of Pharaoh's advisers, see BT *Sotah* 11a, *Sanhedrin* 106a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:9; *Zohar* 2:69a; 3:212a.

153. ***Look, it has covered the eye of the land…*** According to a midrashic interpretation, this description of Israel refers to their defeat of Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and Bashan, who are pictured as *the eye of the land*—that is, powerful rulers upon whom all those nearby depended.

However, Rabbi El'azar demonstrates by verbal analogy that Balak was alluding to the formidable nature of Israel.

In describing the plague of locusts in Egypt, Scripture states: *It covered the eye of the whole land*, and here Balak employs the same image: *Look, it has covered the eye of the land*.

The *Zohar* seems to confuse the plagues of ארבה (*arbeh*), "locusts," and ערב (*arov*), "a swarm, horde (of vermin)." Here, *arov* (whose verbal root means "to mix, mingle") is understood as a mingling of various beasts of prey. See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 8:17; Psalms 78:45; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19, p. 348; *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 11:3.

In the clause "so that the sorcerers and wizards could not stand before them," the object "them" apparently refers to the Israelites, before whom the Egyptian magicians could not stand, due to the plague of *arov*, "swarm." But "them" might refer to the swarm itself, which the sorcerers and wizards could not withstand.

On *the eye of the land* as referring to Sihon and Og, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:7; Rashi on Numbers 22:5. The simple sense of *the eye of the land* is "the surface of the land." For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 150.

154. **As for Balaam, his power and strength were in his mouth...** He was a master sorcerer and gazed with an evil eye, whereas King Balak was a mighty ruler.

155. **Snake, snake, turn aside from your path...** Rabbi El'azar perceives that the snake had been authorized by Heaven to kill a certain man who had sinned, but since that man engaged in *teshuvah*, he has been forgiven and his death sentence annulled.

On the snake being authorized by a divine whisper (or incantation) to kill someone, see the sources cited above, p. 223, n. 108.

156. **after they whispered to you...** From Heaven, directing the snake to kill the sinner.

The clause “they whispered” renders לחישו (*leḥishu*), which could also mean “they murmured; they recited a charm or incantation.” See the preceding note.

157. **I know what you want…** Rabbi El’azar realizes that the snake wants to kill someone—if not his intended victim, then a substitute.

158. **Father gave me a sign…** A certain bodily feature or a distinctive mark.

159. **But that person…** How could Rabbi El’azar possibly know that the sinner had engaged in *teshuvah* when he wasn’t even there?

160. **until they gave it a ransom for that person…** Because once an evil act has been ordained, it must be executed—if not on the intended victim, then on a substitute, a ransom. This principle applies to both the demonic Serpent and its earthly incarnations: snakes. Once they have been empowered to strike someone, they do not “venture out in vain.”

See above, note 85. The phrase “in vain” renders בריקניא (*be-reiqanya*), “in emptiness, emptily, in vain, fruitlessly.” On the formulation “the snake does not venture out in vain,” cf. *Zohar* 1:174b: “Nevertheless, [the evil impulse] does not return *be-reiqanya*, empty-handed.”

161. **Granted, all this…** The Companions understand that a substitute must be found, but they wonder how Rabbi El’azar knew the precise identity and location of the substitute: the Gentile who had harmed a Jew and was lying asleep in the snake’s cave. See above at note 157.

162. **That spirit who was moving toward it…** As described above at note 160. The word “charming” renders לחיש (*laḥeish*), “whispering, reciting a charm.” See above, note 156.

163. **who accomplishes His mission by all** Even by snakes.

On this theme, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 10:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:8; *Pirqei de-Rabbi*

Eli'ezer 49; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:22; *Shemot Rabbah* 10:1; *Zohar* 2:28a; 3:36b, 107a.

164. ***Because you became precious in My eyes…*** Rabbi El'azar wonders why the verse reads יקרת (*yaqarta*), (which he construes as) *you became precious*, since this implies that previously the person was not precious in God's eyes and then made himself so. Instead, the verse should read *Because* אתה יקר (*attah yaqar*), *you are precious, in My eyes*—implying always.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Because* יקרת (*yaqarta*), *you are precious* [or: *you were precious*; *you became precious*], *in My eyes, you have been honored and I love you. I give a man* [or: *men*] *in exchange for you, and nations for your life*.

165. **Certainly so!…** A person who engages in *teshuvah* does indeed make himself precious in God's eyes.

166. ***And I love you…*** In hyperbolic fashion, Rabbi El'azar declares that God loves only those who turn back from sin.

Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 7:4. On the elite status of "masters of *teshuvah*," see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "In the place where *ba'alei teshuvah* (masters of returning, or repentance) stand, the completely righteous cannot stand."

On this Talmudic passage, see BT *Sanhedrin* 99a; *Zohar* 1:39a (*Heikh*), 129b; 2:106a–b, 113b; 3:16b, 202b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 174–75.

167. **But what will I do…** God addresses the person who was meant to be punished.

According to a midrashic reading of the verse in Isaiah, *I give* אדם (*adam*), *a man, in exchange for you*, implies *I give* אדום (*Edom*), *Edom, in exchange for you*. In rabbinic literature, Edom (or Esau) often represents Rome, and in medieval literature it often represents Christendom or Christian rule. Here Rabbi El'azar indicates that the substitute for one who has turned back from sin will be a

stubborn sinner “from the nation of that [demonic] snake,” namely a Christian.

On the innate distinction between Jews and Gentiles, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1:27–47, 95, 102–11; 2:35–44. For parallel medieval Christian views of the demonic nature of Jews, see Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*.

On the midrashic reading of *adam, Edom* (in the context of snake stories), see JT *Shabbat* 6:10, 8c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 10:7; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 22:4; BT *Berakhot* 62b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:8.

168. ***And nations in exchange for your life…*** Based on verbal analogy, Rabbi El’azar identifies these *nations* with the second *nation* mentioned in the verse from Genesis, which apparently refers to Esau (or Edom).

The verse in Genesis is spoken by God to Rebekah about the impending birth of her two sons, Esau and Jacob. It reads in full: *Two nations are in your womb, two peoples from your loins shall issue. People* [or: *nation*] *over people shall prevail, and the elder shall serve the younger*.

169. **the Jew who had been robbed by the Gentile who was killed by the snake…** As told above at notes 157–63.

The Jew declares to God that he accepts what has happened to him—being beaten and robbed on the way—and does not care about his own physical suffering or financial loss, “for whatever You do, You do justly.” But how will he provide for his aging parents?

The expression “justifying for himself the judgment” means acknowledging the justice and rightness of the divine verdict or decree, accepting God’s judgment.

170. **a bundle of dinars…** In addition to the Jew’s own money, there were also coins in that purse belonging to a poor man who intended to arrange his daughter’s wedding.

171. ***The judgments of YHVH are true…*** When judgments are determined in heaven, numerous angels

debate the case sharply—yet eventually concur in a decision.

In the concluding sentence, “all this” means “my aging parents and the poor man’s money.”

On the idiomatic phrase “locking horns,” see above, pp. 262–63, n. 50. The full verse in Psalms reads: *The awe of YHVH is pure, enduring forever; the judgments of YHVH are true* [or: *truth*], צדקו יחדו (*tsadequ yaḥdav*), *all of them are just* [or: *altogether just*; *together they are just*].

172. **the blessed Holy One has performed this miracle for your sake…** The humble Jew does not want to take any credit for the miracle.

173. **He opened the purse, and showed them…** That all the money was there, including that of the poor man who intended to arrange his daughter’s wedding.

174. **Take the spoil of your enemy…** Rabbi El’azar tells him to take another purse from the dead Gentile and return it to its rightful owner. This purse had been stolen by the Gentile’s son from Shim’on, the son of a certain man living “in such and such a place.” The phrase “this wicked one” refers to the Gentile son’s father, who was killed by the snake.

175. **This matter is not by sign…** As before, when Rabbi El’azar was able to recognize the snake by a certain feature or distinctive mark transmitted to him by his father, Rabbi Shim’on. See above, note 158.

176. **his father-in-law’s house…** Rabbi El’azar’s father-in-law, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lekonya, who had been miraculously healed. See above at notes 36, 83–87, 124. The blessing offered by Rabbi El’azar and the Companions is likely the one praising God “who heals the sick.”

177. **He opened, saying…** Having just been miraculously healed, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim’on quotes an appropriate verse, but immediately questions its

redundancy. How could one who has been healed by God ever not be healed?

178. **some of them are by the hand of a messenger…** Namely, the angel Raphael (entrusted with healing) or one of his subordinates. See above, note 71.

"Harassment" renders קטרוגא (*qitruga*), "accusation" by demonic forces, whose denunciations of the person could provoke a relapse of the illness.

The concluding clause "and withheld me and become my surety" renders עשק לי וערב לי (*ve-ashaq li ve-arav li*). It means "God has withheld me [from the Angel of Death or from grave illness] and become my guarantor."

The wording reflects that in Isaiah 38:14: *My eyes languished toward heaven* [or: *grew weak looking toward heaven*]. *My Lord*, עשקה לי ערבני (*asheqah li areveni*), *I am oppressed; be my surety*. Here the Zoharic author relies on a related sense of the verb עשק (*'shq*), "to withhold" (or "extort, confiscate"). See Rashi on the verse. On the theme of surety, see above, note 100.

179. **They told him the whole story…** They told Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on how Rabbi Yose of Peki'in had been selected to die in his place, and how the latter Rabbi Yose was then miraculously saved through his son's fervent plea. (See above at notes 83–102.) Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on declares that he must go and see this other Rabbi Yose.

180. **the Portion of Balak…** Recorded in Numbers 22:2–25:9 and constituting the basis of this entire section of the *Zohar*.

Rabbi El'azar's father-in-law indicates that King Balak's wisdom was greater and more constant than Balaam's. However, Balaam possessed all the keys of sorcery because, unlike Balak, he recited the incantations completely.

On King Balak's being a greater sorcerer than Balaam, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4, 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 6, 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:7, 18; *Zohar* 3:112b, 210a.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Balaam knew how to determine the precise moment each day when God becomes angry. By cursing at that moment, he could effectively doom Israel. See BT *Berakhot* 7a: “Does the blessed Holy One express wrath? Yes, for it has been taught: *God rages every day* (Psalms 7:12). How long is His rage? One moment. And how long is one moment? One fifty-eight-thousand-eight-hundred-and-eighty-eighth of an hour. This is a moment, and no creature can determine it precisely—except for the wicked Balaam, of whom is written *He knows the mind* [or: *knowledge*] *of the Most High* (Numbers 24:16). Now, even the mind of his animal [i.e., his donkey] he did not know, so how could he know *the mind of the Most High?* Well, this teaches that he knew how to determine that precise moment in which the blessed Holy One is angry.”

On this Talmudic passage, see *Sanhedrin* 105b, *Avodah Zarah* 4b; Rashi on Numbers 24:16; *Zohar* 3:63b, 112b–113a, 119a–b, 206b, 208a, 210a, 211b.

181. ***As for you, do not fear…*** The passage in Jeremiah reads: *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob; do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob will return and be calm and secure, with no one frightening him. As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—for I am with you. For I will make an end* [or: *a complete destruction*] *of all the nations where I have scattered you, but of you I will not make an end! I will chasten you* [or: *I will discipline you*] *in just measure* [or: *in justice*], *and will not leave you wholly unpunished* [or: *and will surely not leave you unpunished; and will not clear you completely*]. Cf. Jeremiah 30:10–11.

182. **Jacob was in the house of my grandfather Laban…** Jacob’s uncle and father-in-law, who according to tradition was a master sorcerer. Another midrashic tradition identifies Laban as the father of Beor and thus the

grandfather of Balaam. Since his grandfather once enacted sorcery against Jacob, Balaam concludes that he can do the same against Jacob's descendants.

On Laban's powers of witchcraft (which he wielded against Jacob), see Genesis 30:27; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and *Sekhel Tov*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:133b, 139b, 158b, 161a, 164b, 166b–167a; 2:64b; 3:113a, 208a. On Laban as Balaam's grandfather, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Sefer ha-Yashar, Vayetse*, 142; *Zohar* 1:133b, 166b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:303, n. 229; 6:123, n. 722. Another tradition identifies Laban as Balaam's father, Beor. See BT *Sanhedrin* 105a; *Zohar* 1:126a; 2:192a; 3:147b.

183. **wizardry...** קסמין (*Qismin*), "divination, wizardry." On the distinction between קסם (*qesem*), "wizardry," and נחש (*naḥash*), "omen, sorcery" (mentioned in the preceding paragraph in the text), see *Zohar* 1:164b, 167a; 3:112b, 207a, 211a, 306a (*Tosefet*).

184. **one wind issued from the side of Joseph...** Who symbolizes *Yesod*, identified with the Tree of Life.

The verse in Genesis records Joseph's reprimand when he confronts his brothers, after his silver divining goblet had been found in their possession. It reads in full: *Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Did you not know that a man like me* נחש ינחש (*naḥesh yenaḥesh*), *would surely perform sorcery* [or: *would surely divine*]?"

Here Rabbi Yose interprets the phrase *a man like me* as referring to *Yesod*, Joseph's sefirotic archetype, who will eliminate all sorceries directed against the people of Israel. He may be construing the clause *naḥesh yenaḥesh, would surely perform sorcery*, as if it had a privative sense: *will surely eliminate sorcery*.

185. **the Tree below...** Namely, *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—who is identified with the Tree of Knowledge. Because of *Malkhut*'s royal status, Rabbi Yose applies the verse from Proverbs to Her. The full verse reads: *There is*

wizardry [or: *divination, magic*] *on the lips of a king; in judgment his mouth will not be untrue*.

186. ***Surely there is no sorcery in Jacob…*** Balaam attests to the divine nullification of *sorcery* and *wizardry* that he has just witnessed. Balak and Balaam were, respectively, on the demonic rungs corresponding to wizardry and sorcery.

On the distinction between נחש (*naḥash*), *sorcery*, and קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry*, see above, note 183. The verse in Numbers reads: *Surely there is no* נחש (*naḥash*), *omen* [or: *sorcery*], *in Jacob, no* קסם (*qesem*), *divination* [or: *wizardry*], *in Israel*.

187. **Laban came first…** And nearly destroyed Jacob.

See below, note 477. The full verse in Genesis reads: *God came to Laban the Aramean in a night-dream and said to him, "Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or evil."*

188. **turning everything back on [Haman's] head…** When he and his sons were hanged. The wording here derives from Esther 9:25.

Rabbi Yose wonders about the unusual verbal form תמנו (*tamenu*), *have ceased*, which would normally be spelled תמו (*tammu*). He indicates that the spelling *tamenu* can mean *we have ceased*, and in this verse (according to his creative reading), Israel is celebrating the fact that due to *the loving-kindnesses of YHVH, lo tamenu, we have not ceased*.

189. ***He sent* מלאכים (*mal'akhim*), *messengers…*** The context in Numbers (22:5–6) reads: *He* [namely Balak] *sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the River* [or: *the Euphrates*], *in his people's land, to invite him, saying, "Look, a people has come out of Egypt. Look, it has covered the eye of the land and it is encamped opposite me. Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed." The*

elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went, with implements of divination [or: *spells*] *in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke Balak's words to him*.

Rabbi Yose wonders why Scripture switches from calling them *messengers* to calling them *elders*.

190. **Balak was cunning in all rungs above…** Including both the demonic rungs that generate sorcery by "binding bonds," as well as higher, angelic forces that control those lower rungs.

In ancient and medieval times, sorcerers would cast a spell by the technique of tying knots (or "binding bonds"). See *Zohar* 2:25a, 37b–38a, 52b, 69a; 3:144b (*IR*), 149a; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 127; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 397. Cf. Daniel 5:12, 16.

191. **He wrote him other names…** Balak provided Balaam with names of angels occupying higher rungs, who can compel lower, demonic rungs to enact sorcery.

192. **unlike that of other nations…** Each of whom is ruled by a particular heavenly prince, whereas Israel is ruled directly by God. On the seventy heavenly princes ruling the seventy nations of the world, see above, p. 50, n. 140.

193. **He wrote and sent him the lineage…** Balak sent to Balaam the lineage of the twelve angels surrounding the Divine Chariot-Throne, along with the name of their Patron, apparently referring to *Shekhinah*. He instructed Balaam to focus on these twelve angels, who sustain the twelve tribes of Israel. By performing sorcery against Israel's angelic providers, Balaam could render the tribes below vulnerable to attack by Balak's army.

"Lineage" renders פופיסא (*pophisa*), based on Greek *apophasis*, "sentence, verdict." Here, it means "list, record, lineage." See above, note 151.

194. **Thus, *He sent* מלאכים (*mal'akhim*)…** In this verse the simple sense of מלאכים (*mal'akhim*) is obviously *messengers* (sent by King Balak to Balaam). But Rabbi Yose construes

mal'akhim as *angels*, referring to the angelic lineages sent by Balak. The king wanted Balaam to direct his sorcery against the twelve angels sustaining Israel, thereby rendering the twelve tribes vulnerable. However, he did not realize that Israel is not controlled by angels, as are all other nations, but rather directly by God.

See above, note 192. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 189.

195. **All the rungs binding bonds...** All the demonic forces threatening Israel derive from *Din* (Judgment), which is situated on the left side of the sefirotic Tree and associated with the direction north. Balak thinks that since the twelve angels linked with Israel are "counted [beginning] from the north," symbolizing the Left, they will be vulnerable to Balak's forces, which stem from that sinister side.

On the sorcerous significance of "binding bonds," see above, note 190. The reference to *twelve oxen* is from a description of the large bronze reservoir built by King Solomon in the Temple. This reservoir (called a *sea*) rested on twelve bronze oxen, three facing outward in each direction. The context in 1 Kings (7:23, 25) reads: *He made the sea of cast metal... standing upon twelve oxen: three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east, with the sea set upon them above*.

In Kabbalah this reservoir symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is arrayed by the twelve angels beneath Her. See *Zohar* 1:154a, 241a; 2:164b, 214b.

196. **forty-minus-one rungs...** Thirty-nine demonic forces, along with innumerable subordinates.

The number thirty-nine corresponds to the total number of lashes that a rabbinical court is authorized to inflict. In the *Zohar* this number is applied to demonic powers. See Deuteronomy 25:3; M *Makkot* 3:10; *Zohar* 1:148a (*ST*); 3:114b–115a, 194a, 237a.

197. **But the blessed Holy One did not do so…** He did not leave them vulnerable to Balak and Balaam's machinations, since unlike all other nations, Israel was intimately linked with Him and blessed with the finest feature of the sefirotic Tree.

The word "canopy" renders נופא (*nofa*), "canopy, crown, tree-top, foliage." This Aramaic spelling—recorded in several manuscripts (including Es3, N18, N32, V20)—is hardly distinguishable orthographically from גופא (*gufa*), "body, trunk (of a tree)," which is the reading in the standard printed editions. See Liebes, *Peraqim*, 126–28.

The image of "twelve תחומין (*teḥumin*), boundaries [or: limits, dominions]" refers to twelve potencies within the core of the *sefirot*, corresponding below to the twelve tribes of Israel. The phrase "twelve boundaries" recalls the twelve גבולי אלכסון (*gevulei alakhson*), "diagonal borders" (edges of a cube), mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 5:1. See *Bahir* 64 (95); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 511–12; *Zohar* 1:76b (*ST*), 159b, 199a; 2:2a, 58b, 62b, 64b, 66b, 104b–105a, 229b; 3:78a, 96b, 118b, 134b (*IR*), 138a (*IR*), 148b, 209a; *ZḤ* 2a (*SO*), 62a (*ShS*), 63d (*ShS*), 76d (*MhN, Rut*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:917.

198. ***He found him…*** The verse immediately following the two just quoted. It reads in full: *He found him in a wilderness land, in the emptiness of a howling desert. He encircled him, gave mind to him, guarded him like the pupil of His eye*.

199. **as pertaining to Abraham…** Whom God found in the *wilderness* and *emptiness* of idolatry—and rescued from there.

See the fragment from *Yelammedenu* in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 6:80. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 313; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:10; *Zohar* 3:298b.

200. **He took that branch…** God nurtured Abraham and then uprooted him from his land, transplanting him in the Holy Land.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH said to Abram, "Go you forth from your land, from your birthplace* [or: *kinfolk*], *from your father's house to the land that I will show you!"* See above, p. 97 at n. 136.

201. **If Abraham was the supernal image…** Abraham symbolizes the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed*, who is Himself described here as "Abraham the Elder." If the earthly Abraham represents that pure divine quality, how could he ever have been associated with idolatry?

On the title "Abraham the Elder," see above, note 57. For another interpretation of the anonymous Jew's question, see *Matoq mi-Devash*.

202. **the verse does not prove anything about Abraham…** The verse *He found him in a wilderness land* does not pertain to Abraham, but rather to Jacob, who is mentioned in the preceding verse.

The context in Deuteronomy (32:9–10) reads: *For YHVH's share is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance. He found him in a wilderness land, in the emptiness of a howling desert. He encircled him, gave mind to him, guarded him like the pupil of His eye*.

203. **there is no difficulty here…** Although he eventually attained the rung of *Ḥesed*, Abraham had lowly origins. And according to Rabbi El'azar, the name *Jacob* (in the verse from Deuteronomy) actually alludes to Jacob's grandfather Abraham.

On the identity of Abraham and Jacob, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:3. On Abraham's dependence on the merit of Jacob, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:2; Vol. 2, pp. 362–63 and n. 350.

204. ***The earth was emptiness and void…*** *The earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

The verse reads: *The earth was* תוהו ובוהו (*tohu va-vohu*), *emptiness and waste* [or: *nothingness and void; wilderness and waste*], *with darkness over the abyss and the wind* [or: *the spirit*] *of God hovering over the face of the waters*.

205. **What is meant by *tohu, emptiness*?...** See BT *Ḥagigah* 12a: "תהו (*Tohu*), *Emptiness*—a green line encompassing the whole world, from which darkness issued.... בהו (*Bohu*), *Void*—the slimy stones sunk in the abyss, from which issues water, as is said: *He will stretch over it* קו תהו ואבני בהו (*qav tohu ve-avnei vohu*), *a line of emptiness and plummet-stones of void* (Isaiah 34:11)."

On this Talmudic passage, see *Zohar* 1:11b, 16a; 2:105a, 228b. On *tohu* and *bohu*, see also Vol. 4, p. 153, n. 54; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:460–64.

206. **who is the green line...** According to Dr. Kirtena, the encompassing line of *tohu* represents the outermost layer of the cosmic shells, all enclosing the divine kernel. The next shell, closer to the kernel, is *bohu*. Whereas *tohu* is the source of fleeting flesh, *bohu* generates the bones, enduring longer. On the image of the shells and kernel of the nut, see above, p. 238, n. 17.

The anonymous Jew indicates that the wise doctor's name—קירטנא (*qirtena*), "Kirtena"—derives from the Persian word *qirtena*. The exact meaning of this supposed Persian word is uncertain.

The seventeenth-century Persian dictionary *Borhan-e Qate'* (compiled in India by Borhan Tabrizi) includes an entry for "*Kartuma*," which is identified as "the name of a *ḥakim* (physician, sage) and *daneshmand* (sage) who was one of the Persians." The twentieth-century editor of *Borhan-e Qate'* (Moḥammad Mo'in) notes that *Kartuma* is apparently a corruption of *Martuma* (namely Master Thomas, Saint Thomas), although this itself seems questionable.

Less likely is the suggestion that Dr. Kirtena represents Criton of Heraclea, the renowned personal physician (and procurator) of the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117 CE). See Robert Eisler, "Zur Terminologie und Geschichte der jüdischen Alchemie," 194.

Possibly, *qirtena* is a distorted form of the Persian word *kardan*, "learned, skillful, intelligent, sagacious," which would appropriately describe the revered doctor. Alternatively, the supposed Persian derivation of *qirtena* may disguise a different foreign source: the Greek word *kouratoreia*, "treasury," or its Aramaic equivalent, קורטוד (*qurtor*), "treasury, storehouse." Dr. Kirtena would then be a treasury of wisdom.

Intriguingly, Yehoshua Leibowitz has suggested that Dr. Kirtena represents the famed Greek physician Hippocrates, often referred to as "the father of medicine." Hippocrates' name is composed of two Greek elements: *hippos* (horse) and *kratos* (power); the latter resembles *qirtena*. Maimonides calls Hippocrates "head (or chief) of the doctors" (beginning of *Shemonah Peraqim*), and here the anonymous Jew calls Dr. Kirtena "grand among doctors." Perhaps the Zoharic author is blending the Persian physician *Kartuma* with the figure of Hippocrates.

See Leibowitz and Liebes, "Hitnahagut ha-Rofe ha-Idei'ali 'Qartena Asya.'" On Dr. Kirtena, see also *TZ* 69 (106a); Scholem, "Alchemie und Kabbala," 103; Preis, "Die Medizin im Sohar," 179, 184; Benarroch, "Sava ve-Yanuqa," 278, 304–5.

On Aramaic *qurtor*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 22:18; 24:13 (both in *Parashat Balaq*); Job 3:14; 38:22; *Arukh ha-Shalem* and *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *qrt*; *Zohar* 1:181a (Vol. 3, p. 97, n. 84); *Derekh Emet* on *Zohar* 3:299a.

207. **Within them, *and darkness*...** The next word in the verse from Genesis—*darkness*—signifies the third shell of the cosmic nut (counting from outside). This shell generates "the nation of Esau," which in medieval Jewish literature often represents Christians or Christendom. See above, note 167.

208. **Now, if you say, "From *tohu*" ...** One might maintain that Esau derives from the outermost shell, and Dr. Kirtena agrees, explaining that the shell of *tohu* depends

upon *darkness*, which lies within, closer to the divine kernel. In between these two shells is the shell of *bohu*, identified with "slimy stones." See above, notes 205–6.

209. ***And the spirit of God…*** The divine kernel, from which originates the people of Israel, called Jacob.

Apparently, Dr. Kirtena is construing the verse from Genesis as: *The earth* (*Shekhinah*) *was* (using, or was surrounded by, the various shells, namely) *emptiness and void and darkness*, (all surrounding the kernel, namely) *the spirit of God*. See *Or Yaqar*.

Jacob's title שלימא (*shelima*), "the Complete," derives from the description of the twin brothers in Genesis 25:27: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, whereas Jacob was* איש תם (*ish tam*), *a simple man, dwelling in tents*. The word *tam* means "simple, innocent, plain, mild, quiet, sound, wholesome, complete, perfect." *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc., renders it: שלים (*shelim*), "complete, perfect." See above, pp. 67–68, n. 44.

210. ***Here, a stormy wind coming from the north…*** The full verse reads: *I looked, and here, a stormy wind coming from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a radiance surrounding it; and from within it, like the color of amber, from within the fire*.

The four elements mentioned by Ezekiel (*stormy wind, great cloud, flashing fire, radiance*) correspond to the four elements in the opening verse of Genesis: *tohu* (*emptiness*), *bohu* (*void*), *darkness*, and *the spirit of God*. In the preceding paragraph of the *Zohar, the spirit of God* is identified as the kernel, which corresponds to נגה (*nogah*), *radiance*, in Ezekiel's vision. Deeper within, at the core of the kernel, lies חשמל (*ḥashmal*), *amber*, which corresponds to the phrase *hovering over the face of the waters* and symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother.

Jacob, who derives from *the spirit of God*, shares with it the designation of kernel. God arranged for all the shells (and thus all the nations issuing from them) to be

subjugated to Israel. On the clause *found him in a wilderness land*, see above, note 202.

In other depictions in the *Zohar,* *nogah* (*radiance*) represents the fourth and thinnest shell, while *ḥashmal* (*amber*) symbolizes the kernel. Touching the holy kernel, *nogah* conveys vitality to the demonic realm.

On Ezekiel's vision and the shells, see *Zohar* 2:81b–82a, 203a–b; *ZḤ* 38a–d; Moses de León, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 59–60; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463–64, 509; below at note 286. On *nogah*, see *Zohar* 2:69a, 81b, 140b, 203b, 216a; *ZḤ* 38a–b; Moses de León, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 59–60; *TZ* 18, 36a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463–64, 509. For the full verse in Genesis, see above, note 204.

211. **that book of Dr. Kirtena…** Mentioned above at note 206. Following the passage just quoted, Dr. Kirtena's book applies the verse in Deuteronomy to the profession of healing.

The concluding clause ("so that he may serve the Master of the World") means "so that the ill person may recover and serve God."

On the image of the sick as "lying in the King's prison," see above, note 58. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, note 202.

212. ***he finds him in a wilderness land…*** Suffering from his disease.

213. **Since the blessed Holy One commanded to seize him…** Since God inflicted him with illness as punishment for some wrongdoing, one might conclude that no doctor should intervene.

See BT *Berakhot* 60a, *Bava Qamma* 85a–b; *Midrash Shemu'el* 4:1; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 26:11. On the verse in Psalms as referring to the sick, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 34:1; BT *Nedarim* 40a; *Midrash Tehillim* 41:2; *Zohar* 2:61a, 250b (*Heikh*). The verse reads: *Happy is one who considers* [or: *keeps an eye on*; *looks to*] *the poor* [or: *the helpless*]; *on the day of evil YHVH will deliver him*.

214. **what should he do?...** The doctor should diagnose the disease, effect a cure, and engage in bloodletting.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *He encircled him, gave mind to him, guarded him* [or: *He will encircle him, give mind to him, guard him*] *like the pupil of His eye*. For the context, see above, note 202. Here the verb יסובבנהו (*yesovevenhu*), *He will encircle him*, is interpreted based on the medieval philosophical formula: מסבב הסיבות (*mesabbev ha-sibbot*), "[God] revolves the turn of events." See *Zohar* 1:109a, 110a–b, 191b (Vol. 3, p. 169, n. 529); 2:111b.

Bloodletting (or phlebotomy) was practiced widely in the ancient and medieval world and is mentioned frequently in the Talmud. A broad assortment of illnesses were believed to result from an impurity or superabundance of blood in the human system. Since blood and other bodily fluids were regarded as "humors" that had to remain in proper balance, periodic drawing of blood was felt to ensure good health. See below, p. 530, n. 87.

215. **he must not fail to distinguish between them...** Between the various potent remedies, because if he administers the wrong one, the result could be fatal.

On the concluding clause, see Rashi on BT *Qiddushin* 82a, s.v. *tov she-ba-rofei'im le-geihinnom*.

216. **The blessed Holy One renders judgment above...** And inflicts an appropriate punishment. One who deserves *confiscation of property* does not heal completely until he has paid medical expenses equivalent to the amount imposed from above.

On the timing of full recovery, cf. BT *Avodah Zarah* 55a; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Deuteronomy 28:59; *Zohar* 1:227a–b; *ZḤ* 10d (*MhN*). On the word *uprooting*, see the following note.

217. **One who deserves *uprooting*...** In the verse from Ezra, the word לשרשי (*lishroshi*) means *for uprooting* [or: *banishment*]. Here, apparently, Dr. Kirtena interprets *lishroshi* based on a Geonic reading of a Talmudic passage (BT *Mo'ed*

Qatan 16a), which explains it as imprisonment within a narrow enclosure.

One who deserves this type of "imprisonment" (i.e., illness) will remain "confined" to his sickbed "until he is uprooted entirely," that is, until he is totally impoverished. Sometimes such a person will lose one, or even several, of his limbs.

On the Geonic reading of the Talmudic passage, see Asher ben Yeḥiel on BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16a; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *hardafah*. On *lishroshi*, see also Rashi and Ibn Ezra on Ezra 7:26.

218. **all the ransom...** Cf. above, note 85.

219. **this doctor or this book...** Dr. Kirtena or his book. (See above, notes 206, 211.) Rabbi El'azar recalls that a certain donkey-driver told him about such a doctor.

Cf. M *Berakhot* 5:5: "It was said of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Dosa that he used to pray for the sick and say, 'This one will live; this one will die.'"

The phrase "wandering donkey-driver" renders טייעא (*tayya'a*), "Arab," Arab caravaner, derived from the name of the Arabian tribe *Ṭayyi'*. See above, p. 250, n. 13.

220. **murmured incantations over illness...** On healing by whispering charms or incantations, see M *Sanhedrin* 10:1; *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 12:10; JT *Sotah* 1:4, 16d; *Sanhedrin* 10:1, 28a–b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:9; BT *Sanhedrin* 101a, *Shevu'ot* 15b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 36; *Devarim Rabbah* 5:15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:20.

221. **All of them he clarified...** Dr. Kirtena identified which healing formulas were permitted and which were forbidden. He also discussed the technique of exorcism.

On the distinction between נחש (*naḥash*), "sorcery, omen," and קסם (*qesem*), "wizardry, divination," see above, note 183.

222. **the Holy Lamp** Rabbi Shim'on. On this honorific title, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

223. **those sealed mysteries concerning Balaam...** And his powers of sorcery.

224. **I was whispering incantations…** For healing, from Dr. Kirtena’s book. These incantations consisted of holy names, whose letters “were ascending and descending.”

225. **that Jew, who is named Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah…** Rabbi El'azar finally reveals the name of the anonymous Jew, who, it turns out, is also named Rabbi Yose. Cf. above, note 85.

226. **in the mysteries of Balaam…** Found in Dr. Kirtena's book. There Rabbi El'azar found some of the angelic names that King Balak sent to Balaam. (See above at notes 189–94.)

The concluding sentence means that all such healing formulas depend on devotion and sincere prayer. On incorrect names of angels, cf. *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:5.

227. **healing with verses of Torah…** Which is explicitly forbidden.

See BT *Shevu'ot* 15b. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 67a; *Tosafot, Shevu'ot* 110a, s.v. *asur*. On the blessing recited by Rabbi El'azar, cf. the traditional blessing (recorded in BT *Berakhot* 58a), recited over seeing wise Gentiles: "Blessed is He who has given of His wisdom to flesh-and-blood."

228. **so that human beings will not stray from revering…** This explanation resembles those offered by Rashi and Maimonides as to why King Hezekiah's Book of Remedies was concealed. See Rashi on BT *Pesaḥim* 56a, s.v. *ve-ganaz sefer refu'ot*; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:37.

On the jump in pagination (from 3:306a to 3:193b), see above, note 36.

229. ***Balaam son of Beor…*** The full verse actually reads: *Balaam son of Beor, the soothsayer, the Children of Israel killed by the sword with the rest of their slain*. The quotation above apparently conflates this with the wording in Numbers 31:8: *Balaam son of Beor they killed by the sword*.

230. ***Never again did there arise…*** See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357: "*Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—in Israel* none arose, but among the nations of the world one did! Who is this? Balaam son of Beor." (See above, note 4.) Balaam was the demonic

counterpart of Moses, so how were the Israelites able to kill him?

The full verse in Numbers (recording Balaam's words) reads: *He said to Balak*, "*Station yourself here by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I myself may be happened upon* [or: *and I myself will be encountered*; *and I myself will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*].

Here Rabbi Shim'on transforms ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder*, into אעקר לכה (*e'qar le-khoh*), "I will uproot *Koh*," that is, "I will eliminate *Shekhinah*," who protects Israel. See above, note 148.

231. **in the Book of Wisdom of King Solomon…** One of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. Naḥmanides several times refers to, and quotes from, an Aramaic version of the Apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*. See above, p. 78, n. 70.

On the first sign, cf. BT *Shabbat* 33a: "Dropsy is a sign of sin; jaundice is a sign of causeless hatred." See *Yevamot* 60b; *Zohar* 1:190a.

The statement about מלין (*millin*), "[excessive] words," may be based playfully on BT *Pesaḥim* 53a (and parallels): "מילין (*Milin*, or *Meilin*), gall oak trees, are a sign of mountainous terrain." Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:5, and Margulies's note on p. 360.

The concluding sentence means that a boaster is worse than a sinner or a fool, since he includes the characteristics of both.

232. ***Let a stranger praise you…*** Rabbi Shim'on mentions a creative interpretation of this verse: "and if there is no *stranger*, then *your mouth*," i.e., "If no one else praises you, then do so yourself!" But he rejects the simple sense of this interpretation and offers a different one.

The first interpretation mentioned by Rabbi Shim'on appears in Isaac ibn Sahula, *Meshal Haqadmoni*, 2, p. 251;

Solomon ben Abraham Adret, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 1:84; Estori Ha-Parḥi, *Kaftor va-Feraḥ*, 44. See *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem. Cf. BT *Nedarim* 62a, and Samuel Edels, ad loc.

The alternative interpretation matches one that appears in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot), par. 328. On the concluding sentence, cf. the medieval saying quoted by Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera, *Sefer ha-Mvaqqesh*, 71: "A person's entire intellect is in his words." See BT *Me'ilah* 17b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:7 (on 1:1); above, p. 253, n. 23.

233. **That wicked Balaam boasted...** He claimed that he had knowledge of supernatural powers, which was true, since he was intimately linked with demonic forces. But his words were deceptive, because whoever heard him thought that he was referring to knowledge of the true God. On *El* and *Elyon*, see below.

234. ***one who hears the sayings of El...*** This claim of Balaam's was true, because he had direct contact with אל (*el*), *a god*—namely a false, demonic god—though not with האל (*ha-El*), *the* (true) *God*.

235. ***And knows the knowledge of* עליון (*Elyon*), *the Most High...*** This, too, was technically accurate, since Balaam had intimate knowledge of the highest demonic power. The "rungs of defilement" are pictured as forces conducting a ship on the ocean and controlling a storm; the highest such rung is described as the "captain."

Anyone hearing Balaam make this claim was fooled into thinking that the sorcerer knew the mind of the one true God—*the Most High*.

The number thirty-nine ("forty-minus-one") corresponds to the total number of lashes that a rabbinical court is authorized to inflict. In the *Zohar* this number is applied to demonic forces. See above, note 196.

On Balaam's contact with the highest demonic power, see *Zohar* 3:112b. On demonic forces associated with a

ship, see BT *Pesaḥim* 111b. Cf. ibid. 112b; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 44; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. See also below at note 308.

236. ***Who beholds a vision of Shaddai…*** Balaam didn't actually see a direct מַחֲזֵה (*maḥazeh*), *vision of, Shaddai*. Rather, he saw the two fallen angels Uzza and Aza'el, who are pictured as a branch issuing from *Shaddai* and are each described as a מֶחֱזָה (*meḥezah*), *window*, of (or on) *Shaddai*. They are named respectively *falling* and *eyes uncovered*, based on the wording in Numbers.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of God and knows the knowledge of the Most High. A vision of Shaddai he beholds*, נופל וגלוי עינים (*nofel u-glu'i einayim*), *falling with eyes uncovered* [literally: *falling and eyes uncovered*]. (Here the verse is quoted with the slightest difference: *who beholds a vision of Shaddai*, which matches the wording in Numbers 24:4.)

According to the simple sense of the verse, of course, the phrase *falling with eyes uncovered* describes Balaam's ecstatic state. Here, however, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the two components of the phrase *falling and eyes uncovered* refer respectively to Uzza and Aza'el, who constitute the *vision of Shaddai* beheld by Balaam. See below, notes 537–38.

According to legend, the angels Uzza and Aza'el opposed the creation of Adam and Eve, fell from heaven, and were attracted to *the daughters of men* (Genesis 6:2). They were punished by being bound in chains of iron in the Mountains of Darkness, from where they still manage to wreak havoc as masters of sorcery. See above, pp. 24–25, n. 61.

The full verse in Kings (describing Solomon's Lebanon Forest House) reads: *All the entrances and the doorposts had square frames—three tiers*, ומול מחזה אל מחזה (*u-mul meḥezah el meḥezah*), *window facing window*.

237. **Where was Balaam at that time?…** When he was killed. (See above at note 229.) It seems unlikely that

Balaam remained in Midian (or Moab) after having failed to curse the Israelites there, since Scripture states that he intended to return to his land. Rabbi Shim'on explains that Balaam lingered in order to claim the reward for his advice about seducing the Israelites to consort with Moabite and Midianite women and to worship Baal-peor. As a result of this sin, twenty-two (actually twenty-four) thousand Israelites died in a plague sent by God.

See Numbers 25:1–9; 31:16; and *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 14: "*They killed the kings of Midian, besides their slain men… and Balaam son of Beor* [*they killed by the sword*] (Numbers 31:8). What did that wicked one [namely Balaam] want from the kings of Midian? Is it not written *Balaam rose and went and returned to his place* (ibid. 24:25)? Well, once he heard that through his advice twenty-four thousand [Israelites] perished, he returned to collect his reward. Therefore it is written *and Balaam son of Beor* along with *the five kings of Midian*." See above, note 143.

238. **he flew into the air with his two sons…** According to rabbinic tradition, Yannes and Yambres were two prominent Egyptian sorcerers who were involved with the incident of the Golden Calf. Several sources also identify them as the sons of Balaam.

Rabbi Shim'on agrees that Yannes and Yambres were killed immediately after the worship of the Golden Calf, but he states that their father, Balaam, absorbed their sorcerous powers, enabling him to fly in the air. In this sense, he flew "with" them.

The full verse in Exodus (describing the aftermath of the worship of the Golden Calf) reads: *The Levites did according to the word of Moses, and about three thousand men of the people fell on that day*. Rabbi Shim'on focuses on the approximate figure *about three thousand*, and wonders why Scripture doesn't specify the exact number who died. He explains that this refers to Yannes and

Yambres, who were equivalent to (i.e., *about*) *three thousand men*.

On Balaam flying in the air, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 31:8; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 14, *Mattot* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 23; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20; 22:5; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Numbers 785; Rashi on Numbers 31:6; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6:144, n. 853.

On Yannes and Yambres, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 1:15; 7:11; BT *Menaḥot* 85a; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 19; *Midrash Avkir*, 43 (quoted in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus 235); *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiva*, 178–79; *Zohar* 2:191a–192b. (In *Menaḥot* and *Avkir* they are called Yoḥana and Mamre.) On Yannes and Yambres as Balaam's two sons, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 22:22; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus 168, 176; *Zohar* 2:192a. On the wording *about three thousand men*, see Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 32:28, par. 234.

239. **Shadow of dragons crouching over all serpents...** Apparently, Phinehas is calling out to the cosmic serpent to curl (or move) its hair, thereby revealing Balaam's path through the sky.

Medieval astronomers applied the name Draco ("Dragon") to the constellation extending more than halfway around the North Pole. See Vol. 2, p. 215, n. 96. Here, the word טולא (*tulla*), "shadow," plays on the name צליה (*tsalyah*), "Zaliah" (which can be construed as "shadow of God").

For various interpretations of Phinehas's exclamation, see *Or Yaqar, Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Derekh Emet*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

240. ***He went off* שפי (*shefi*), *smoothly*...** In this description of Balaam's movement, the rare word שפי (*shefi*) is often understood to mean "silently, alone," based on the root שפה (*shfh*), "to be calm, silent, smooth." Here, Rabbi Shim'on links it with שפיפון (*shefifon*), "viper." He is implying that *shefi* refers to the male demonic serpent, while *shefifon*

includes both the male and female serpents. By seizing both powers, Zaliah was able to overcome Balaam, who relied only on *shefi*, the male serpent.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balaam said to Balak, "Station yourself by your ascent offering, while I move about. Perhaps YHVH will happen upon me* [or: *will chance upon me, will allow Himself to be encountered by me*] *and will show me something that I may tell you." And he went off* שפי (*shefi*), *silently*.

The full verse in Genesis records Jacob's blessing of Dan: *May Dan be a serpent on the way,* שפיפון (*shefifon*), *a viper, on the path, that bites a horse's heels and its rider topples backward*. Both Samson and (according to the *Zohar*) Zaliah were descendants of Dan.

On *shefi* and *shefifon*, see BT *Sotah* 10a, *Sanhedrin* 105a; *Leqaḥ Tov* and *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 23:3; *Zohar* 1:169b–170a, 243b. On *May Dan be a serpent* as alluding to Samson, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97, p. 1222; 98:14; 99:11; *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 49:17; BT *Sotah* 9b; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 12. Cf. BT *Sotah* 10a, *Sanhedrin* 105a.

241. **Ira, who was with David...** According to 2 Samuel 20:26, *Ira the Jarite was also a priest to David*. In rabbinic tradition, Ira appears as David's teacher. A few chapters later in 2 Samuel (23:26, 38), two other figures named Ira appear, both of whom were warriors associated with David.

Rabbi Shim'on indicates that Ira was also descended from Dan, and he links the description *that bites a horse's heels* with the verset *David hamstrung all the chariot horses*.

On Ira the Jarite as David's teacher, see BT *Eruvin* 63a, *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b, *Gittin* 59a, *Sanhedrin* 36a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; *Midrash Shemu'el* 8:2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 3:2.

242. **Seraiah…** In 2 Samuel 8:17, a Seraiah is mentioned as David's scribe. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that Seraiah is descended from Dan.

According to a rabbinic tradition, the secondary messianic figure Messiah, son of Joseph (or Ephraim), precedes Messiah, son of David, and dies heroically in battle with the enemies of God and Israel before the ultimate triumph of Messiah, son of David. (See above, p. 78, n. 71.) According to Rabbi Shim'on, the verse *Your deliverance I await, O YHVH!* refers to the Messianic redemption, although he acknowledges earlier interpretations of the verse.

On *Your deliverance* as referring to Messianic redemption, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 98:14; 99:11; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:24. On its referring to Samson, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 49:18; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 49:17–18.

On the connection between Seraiah (from Dan) and Christian legends about the Danite descent of the anti-Christ, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6:144, n. 854.

243. **When that wicked one landed…** When Balaam fell from the skies, Phinehas condemned him for what he had inflicted upon Israel—in particular, his evil counsel about seducing the Israelites to sin in the affair of Peor. See above, note 237.

244. **Come and kill him, but not with the Name…** Not by pronouncing the Divine Name, which has the potency to kill. See Vol. 5, p. 128, n. 364; Vol. 8, p. 195, n. 411.

The full verse in Numbers (spoken by Balaam) reads: *Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered* רבע (*rova*), *the dust-cloud* [or: *seed, quarterland*, (*even*) *a fourth*] *of, Israel? May my soul die the death of the upright, and may my end* [or: *fate*] *be like his*. On the question of whether Balaam's wish would or would not be fulfilled, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; BT *Sanhedrin* 105a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 21, p. 116; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 23:10.

245. **a sword engraved with a serpent…** Fittingly, Balaam was killed "with his own," namely with a sword engraved on both sides with a demonic image.

The double image of the serpent matches the interpretation of שפיפון (*shefifon*), "viper," as including the male and female serpents. See above, note 240. On the image of an engraved sword, see Vol. 5, p. 128, n. 363; cf. Vol. 4, p. 231, n. 118; 347, n. 525.

According to several rabbinic sources, Phinehas (or Phinehas and his soldiers) killed Balaam. See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 31:8; BT *Sanhedrin* 106b; *Tanḥuma, Mattot* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 22:5.

246. **For such is the way of that side…** Of the demonic Other Side.

On the association of Balaam with snakes, cf. Numbers 24:1: *He did not go, as time after time, to encounter* נחשים (*neḥashim*), *omens*. The term נחש (*naḥash*), *omen*, may be related etymologically to its homonym נחש (*naḥash*), "snake." See *Zohar* 1:125b, 243b; Scholem. Cf. below at notes 352–53.

According to BT *Gittin* 57a, Balaam is punished in Hell by being immersed in "boiling semen." This particular punishment may correspond to his evil counsel about seducing the Israelites to consort with Moabite and Midianite women and to worship Baal-peor. (See above, note 237.) Alternatively, it matches the rabbinic tradition that Balaam committed bestiality with his donkey. According to the *Zohar*, Balaam did so in order to draw down upon himself an impure spirit.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 105a–b, *Avodah Zarah* 4b (quoted below, note 577); *Zohar* 1:125b–126a; 2:21b (*MhN*), 263b–264a (*Heikh*); 3:107b, 207a; *ZḤ* 47c; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 14–15 (18); idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 75. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 105a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Balaam practiced sorcery with his penis."

247. **the Book of Ashmedai…** King of the demons.

The phrase “the rock where Balaam fell” means the spot where he fell from the sky. See above at notes 238–39. In the concluding sentence, “in every single one” means “in every single snake.” On the power of a snake’s head, see below at note 352.

On King Solomon and Ashmedai, see BT *Gittin* 68a–b; *Midrash Tehillim* 78:12; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:165–72; 6:299–300, n. 86. On the book that he taught to (or left for) King Solomon, see *Zohar* 2:128a; 3:19a, 43a, 77a.

248. **the Queen of Sheba…** Who came to King Solomon and posed various riddles to him.

On her being a sorceress or demon, see *Targum*, Job 1:15; *Zohar* 3:308b (*Tosefet*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6:292, n. 55; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 87–97.

On the association of boiling semen with Balaam, see above, note 246. The full verse in Kings reads: *Solomon told her* [i.e., answered] *all her questions* [literally: *all her words*]. *There was no question hidden from the king, which he did not tell her*. The quotation here in the *Zohar*—*The king told her all her heart*—reflects the wording in Judges 16:17 concerning Samson and Delilah: *He told her all his heart* [i.e., *all that was in his heart*]. See *Zohar* 3:308b (*Tosefet*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146.

249. **when a person emits that semen lustfully…** If a sorcerer masturbates lustfully, he ejaculates semen “for the sake of that [demonic] snake.” This semen can then be utilized to subdue the snake.

On the demonic nature of masturbation, see Vol. 5, pp. 60–61, n. 176. Cf. Vol. 8, p. 69, n. 44. Cf. also BT *Sanhedrin* 105a (quoted above, note 246): “Balaam practiced sorcery with his penis.”

250. **in her heart…** Namely, in the heart of the Queen of Sheba.

251. **From here on…** Rabbi Shim’on concludes by alluding to what God did to the wicked Balaam. On the

tension between revealing and concealing, see Vol. 8, pp. 320–21, n. 6.

252. ***The name of the wicked will rot…*** The full verse reads: *The memory of the righteous is for a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot*.

253. ***Now, please, go curse this people for me…*** The full verse (spoken by Balak to Balaam) reads: *Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed*. For the context, see above, note 1. The *Zohar* passage that follows here does not refer to this verse. See below, note 286.

254. ***A prayer of a poor person…*** The formula *A prayer of* so-and-so appears several times in the Bible. See *Midrash Tehillim* 90:2; *Shemot Rabbah* 21:4; *Aggadat Bereshit* 6:1; *Zohar* 1:168b; 2:44a. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:168b; 2:86b.

255. ***A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet…*** According to Rabbi Abba, Habakkuk's *prayer* was different than those of Moses, David, and *a poor person*, because Habakkuk was not supplicating God but rather praising and thanking Him for having restored him to life.

According to the book of Kings, an anonymous wealthy "Shunammite woman" (namely from the town of Shunem) fed and housed the prophet Elisha. She was rewarded with a son, who later died but was resuscitated by Elisha. A medieval tradition identifies this son of the Shunammite woman with the prophet Habakkuk.

See 2 Kings 4:8–37; Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Rimzei ha-Haftarot, Shavu'ot*; *Zohar* 1:7b; 2:44a–45a; Baḥya ben Asher, *Kad ha-Qemaḥ*, s.v. *orḥim*, 37.

256. **there are three that are called *a prayer*…** Of supplication; and a poor person's prayer is true prayer. See *Zohar* 2:86b.

According to the *Zohar*, Moses' title *man of Elohim* implies that he was "the husband of *Shekhinah*." See Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128. The formula *A prayer of David* appears also in Psalms 17:1.

Elsewhere, the *Zohar* associates *Shekhinah* with both prayer (since She praises Her spouse, *Tif'eret*) and poverty (since She has nothing of Her own, only what She receives from the *sefirot* above Her). See *Zohar* 1:168b; 2:232b–233a; 3:113b.

257. **which is the most esteemed of all?...** The genuine heartfelt prayer of someone in need surpasses all other prayers, even those of Moses and David.

The verse in Psalm 102 reads: *A prayer of a poor person when* יעטף (*ya'atof*), *he is faint*. Rabbi Abba wonders why the Psalmist employs the rare form *ya'atof* and not the relatively more common form יתעטף (*yit'attef*), *he feels faint*. He explains that *ya'atof* implies "delay," based on an interpretation of the root עטף (*'tf*) in Genesis 30:42.

On the root *'tf* as implying "delay" (in Genesis or in this psalm), see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 30:42; *Bereshit Rabbah* 73:10; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:3; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 27:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 102:1; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *gf* (2:335), and *'tf* (6:188); Rashi on Genesis 30:42; Deuteronomy 11:14.

The form *yit'attef* can also be construed here as "he wraps himself," referring to the poor person wrapping himself in a tallit in preparation for prayer. See *Zohar* 3:278a (*RM*); *TZ* 6, 22a–b; 11, 26b; 21, 55b.

On the superior quality of a poor person's prayer, see *Zohar* 1:168b; 2:61a, 86b; 3:9a; Vol. 4, p. 487, n. 437. On his quarreling with God, see, e.g., *Vayiqra Rabbah* 34:16.

258. ***before YHVH*, indeed!** Without any court intervening.

259. **with His vessels** The brokenhearted and poor are pictured as God's precious "broken vessels." See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:5; *Mishnat Rabbi*

Eli'ezer 11:18, p. 211; *Zohar* 1:10b; 2:86b, 218a, 233a; 3:9a, 90b–91a; *ZḤ* 77c (*MhN, Rut*); *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 38:1; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1455, n. 120; 1463, nn. 288, 308.

260. **Moses offered his prayer…** After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses prayed to God for forty days and forty nights, begging Him to spare the people. Rabbi Abba implies that Moses' prayer did not reach God immediately because it was delayed by the prayers of the poor! On the extent of Moses' prayer, see Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; 10:10.

261. ***Preserve my soul…*** The full verse reads: *Preserve my soul, for I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *faithful* [or: *devout*]. *Deliver Your servant who trusts in You—O You, my God*.

Although David identified himself as *ḥasid* (*faithful*), "all was included within him," that is, he still embodied poverty as well. As the ideal king, David symbolizes *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who is Herself considered "poor," having nothing of Her own, only what She receives from the *sefirot* above Her. See *Zohar* 2:232b–233a; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 30; above, note 256.

262. **Nevertheless…** Even though King David abandoned his "poverty" and called himself *faithful*, still a person should humble himself in prayer like a poor person.

263. **a person must not consider himself wicked** See M *Avot* 2:13, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on (son of Yoḥai): "Do not be wicked in your own sight." See BT *Yevamot* 25b, in the name of Rava: "A person may not make himself wicked [i.e., incriminate himself]."

See also the formulation of Naḥmanides (quoted in *Shittah Mequbbetset, Ketubbot* 19a): "A person may not consider himself not to be a *ḥasid* (a devout or pious person)." On the passage in *Yevamot*, see BT *Ketubbot* 18b; *Sanhedrin* 9b, 25a.

264. **If so, he should never specify his sins…** If a person should not consider himself wicked, then he should never confess his sins. But Rabbi El'azar explains that when

one confesses his sins, he becomes *ḥasid* (faithful, devout, pious), since he is welcoming the opportunity to turn back to God. Thereby he cleaves to *Ḥesed*, the divine right hand.

On the need to confess and specify one's sins, see *Tosefta Yoma* 4:14; JT *Yoma* 8:9, 45c; BT *Yoma* 86b; *Zohar* 2:41a (*Piq*); 3:20a, 231a. On opposition to declaring one's sins, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, *Sotah* 7b; *Zohar* 2:186a.

On God's right hand being extended to receive those who engage in *teshuvah*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 30; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41; liturgy for *Taḥanun* and the High Holy Days; and *Zohar* 3:75a. Cf. *Mekhilta, Shirta* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:5; *Sifrei*, Numbers 134; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 3:29; BT *Pesaḥim* 119a.

265. **When eliminating leaven…** According to rabbinic tradition, when a person searches his home for leaven in preparation for *Pesaḥ*, he does not need to inspect the uppermost or lowermost holes in the walls.

See *Tosefta Pesaḥim* 1:3; JT *Pesaḥim* 1:1, 27b; BT *Pesaḥim* 8a. On leaven as representing the evil impulse, see below, p. 638, n. 421.

266. **so we read in *Nega'im*…** According to Leviticus, when a person is inflicted with נגע צרעת (*nega tsara'at*), *scaly affliction*, he must be inspected by the priest. *If the priest sees, and look, there is a white inflammation in the skin, and it has turned some hair white, and there is a live patch of raw flesh in the inflammation, it is chronic scale disease on the skin of his body, and the priest shall declare him impure* (Leviticus 13:10–11). However, the Mishnah states that if the live patch (of raw flesh) appears only on one of the twenty-four tips of a person's limbs, he is not considered impure; the priest does not need to trouble himself trying to inspect these. These "tips" include the twenty tips of the fingers and toes, the tips of the ears, the tip of the nose, the tip of a man's penis, and a woman's nipples (counted as one).

See M *Nega'im* 6:7; *Tosefta Nega'im* 2:12; *Sifra, Nega'im* 2:9, 60d–61a. Leviticus 13:12 (describing a different situation) reads in full: *If the scales break out in the skin, and the scales cover all the skin of the afflicted person from head to foot, wherever the priest's eyes can see*. On the limiting sense of the clause *wherever the priest's eyes can see*, see *Sifra, Nega'im* 4:3, 63b–c; Rashi on *Gittin* 42b, s.v. *be-khullan*; and on *Qiddushin* 25a, s.v. *ein mittamme'in*. Cf. *Sifra, Nega'im* 2:8, 60d; *Tosefta Nega'im* 2:12.

On the term מחיה (*miḥyah*), "a live patch (of raw flesh)," see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:784, 790. On the term *tsara'at*, often translated imprecisely as *leprosy*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774–76, 816–26.

267. ***Look, like the eyes of servants…*** The full verse reads: *Look, like the eyes of slaves* [or: *servants*] *to the hand of their masters, like the eyes of a slave-girl* [or: *handmaiden*] *to the hand of her mistress, so are our eyes to YHVH our God until He grants us grace*. For the full verse in Psalm 86, see above, note 261.

268. ***for to You, YHVH…*** The verse reads: *for to You*, אדני (*adonai*), *O Lord* [or: *O my Lord*].

269. **I raise my hands in prayer…** Since the fingers of the hands symbolize the ten *sefirot*, one should raise his hands only in prayer, thereby stimulating the sefirotic flow.

The clause "and we translate…" refers to *Targum Onqelos* on the verse in Genesis, which renders Abraham's declaration *I raise my hand to YHVH* as *I raise my hand in prayer before YHVH*. See *Zohar* 1:65a; 2:9a, 67a, 70a (*RR*), 268b (*Heikh*); 3:258b, 287a.

In the concluding sentence, "these four" refers to the four types that a person should imitate during the course of his prayer: the poor, the faithful, the servants, and those who surrender their souls for the sanctification of the Name. See above at note 263.

On the formulation “a person is forbidden to raise his hands…,” see *Zohar* 2:67a; 3:145a (*Piq*). On the sefirotic symbolism of the ten fingers, see also *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:3: “Ten *sefirot belimah*—equivalent to the ten fingers, five opposite five.” See above, p. 247, n. 7.

270. **At first, a servant, arranging praise…** A person begins the morning prayers as a servant chanting praises to his Divine Master. Later, following the recitation of the *Amidah* (which is so central that it is known simply as “the Prayer”), he is again like a servant, having arranged his prayer. After the entire service, he is once again like a servant.

See BT *Berakhot* 34a, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “In the first [three blessings of the *Amidah*], one resembles a servant arranging praise before his master; in the middle ones, he resembles a servant who requests an allowance from his master; in the last ones, he resembles a servant who has received an allowance from his master and departs, moving on.” See *Zohar* 3:223a (*RM*).

271. **Afterward, to place himself…** After the first instance of becoming like a servant (in the early part of the service), one should recite the opening line of *Shema*—*Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4). Thereby, he declares God’s oneness and “unifies” Him. While doing so, a person should intend that he is surrendering his soul for the sanctification of God’s Name.

The connection between reciting the *Shema* and surrendering one’s soul derives from the famous story about Rabbi Akiva, who recited this prayer as he was being executed by the Romans. Through the ages, Jewish martyrs imitated Akiva by reciting it as they went to their deaths.

See JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Sotah* 5:5, 20c; BT *Berakhot* 61b. On the significance of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 133b–134b, 160b–162a, 216b; 3:162a, 203b–204a, 236b, 262b–263a, 264a–b, 268a; *ZḤ* 48a, 56d–58d (*QhM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:971–74.

272. **Afterward, to set himself as a poor person…** While reciting the prayer immediately following the *Shema*, known as *Emet ve-Yatsiv* (True and Firm), and then proceeding to the *Amidah* (known as Prayer).

In the daily morning liturgy, the blessing "Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who has redeemed Israel" immediately precedes the *Amidah*. It is considered meritorious to join the blessing of Redemption to this prayer without any interruption or pause.

See BT *Berakhot* 4b, 9b, 10b; *Zohar* 1:132b, 205b, 228b; 2:128b, 138b, 156a, 216b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 78–79; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 75–76 (96). On setting oneself as a poor person during prayer, see [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 30.

273. **'who hears prayer'…** During this prayer, toward the end of the *Amidah*, one should confess his sins. Thereby he cleaves to *Ḥesed*, the divine right hand, and is considered *ḥasid* (faithful, devout, pious).

See above, note 264. On the custom of confessing during this prayer, see Ḥayyim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavvanot*, 1:236b–237a; Moses ibn Makhir, *Seder ha-Yom*, 19; Abraham Gombiner, *Magen Avraham, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 119:1.

274. **Who includes all of these?…** By being God's faithful servant, one includes the other three qualities as well (being poor, being faithful, and surrendering one's soul for the sanctification of the Name).

The "three servants" are the three times during prayer when one should be (like) a servant: in the early part of the service, when one completes the *Amidah*, and at the end of the entire service. See above, note 270. For the full verse in Psalms, see above, note 267.

275. **Between servant and servant, those others…** Between the first instance of being a servant (in the early part of the service) and the second (after completing the *Amidah*), one should surrender his soul while reciting the opening verse of the *Shema*, and then set himself as poor and

needy as he proceeds from the *Shema* into the *Amidah*, and then place himself among the faithful as he confesses his sins during the blessing "who hears prayer" toward the end of the *Amidah*.

276. **at that third servant…** At the end of the entire service, when one becomes like a servant for the third time.

277. **Two of those three servants…** Between the first two instances of being a servant (in the early part of the service and when completing the *Amidah*), a person should include the other three qualities (being poor, being faithful, and surrendering one's soul for the sanctification of the Name). Then when one completes the entire service and becomes a servant for the third time, he is touched by *Ḥesed*, the divine right hand. This third instance corresponds to David's plea: *Deliver Your servant*.

The full verse in Psalm 116 reads: *O YHVH, verily I am Your servant; I am Your servant, Your handmaiden's son. You have undone my fetters*.

278. **When we taste them, we cannot eat…** That is, "we cannot comprehend their secrets."

See JT *Sheqalim* 5:1, 48c, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman: "The first ones plowed, sowed, weeded, cleared, hoed, harvested, piled sheaves, threshed, winnowed, selected, ground, sifted, kneaded, tore [the dough], and baked—and yet we have no mouth to eat!"

Rabbi Abba says, "It is certainly so" that one should become like a servant. The "three servants" represent the three times one should do so during a single entire service ("in one place"). The third instance is actually for the glory of God, who redeemed Israel from Egyptian servitude and became their Master. In Leviticus 25:55, the phrases *as servants* and *My servants* refer to the first two instances of becoming like a servant during prayer; while the third instance (whereby God is crowned) is referred to earlier in that same chapter by the phrase *as slaves*.

For the metaphor of eating and tasting, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 4:13; *Zohar* 1:255b (*Hash*); 2:29a, 149a, 176a–b, 217b; above, p. 260 at n. 42; *ZḤ* 37c.

Leviticus 25:55 reads in full: *For Mine are the Children of Israel as slaves* [or: *as servants*]; *they are My slaves* [or: *My servants*], *whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am YHVH your God*. Leviticus 25:42 reads in full: *For they are My slaves* [or: *My servants*], *whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as slaves are sold* [or: *in a slave's sale*].

279. ***Who among you reveres YHVH…*** The verse continues: *heeding* [or: *hearing*] *the voice of His servant*.

See BT *Berakhot* 6b, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: "If anyone comes regularly to synagogue and one day does not come, the blessed Holy One inquires about him, as is said: *Who among you reveres YHVH, heeding the voice of His servant? Though he walks in darkness and has no gleam*, [*let him trust in the name of YHVH and rely upon his God*]." See *Zohar* 2:131b.

According to this rabbinic interpretation, the verse from Isaiah implies that God inquires about the person who *reveres YHVH* (namely who comes regularly to the synagogue) but one day *walks in darkness* (that is, fails to appear). But Rabbi El'azar wonders why the verse mentions *hearing the voice of His servant*; what does this have to do with the act of prayer?

280. **Rather, one who offers his prayer…** The phrase *hearing the voice of His servant* now means one who prays daily hears the divine *voice* declaring that he is *His servant* and glorying in him.

281. אשר הלך חשכים **(*Asher halakh ḥashekhim*), *Though he walks in darkness…*** The passage in BT *Berakhot* 6b (quoted above, note 279) implies that one who regularly comes to synagogue and one day fails to come thereby *walks in darkness*. See Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *asher halakh*.

Rabbi El’azar, however, construes the clause differently, applying it to the male and female aspects of the demonic Other Side. Whereas this Other Side generally closes up (or blocks) the supernal lights, three times a day the evil couple roams through the world, heading for their abode in the Mountains of Darkness. These are the opportune times for prayer, when the supernal lights can radiate into the world.

Concerning one who fails to show up in synagogue, God says, “Alas for so-and-so. Now that *halakh ḥashekhim*, [the male and female demonic] *darknesses have gone*, and are no longer blocking the supernal lights, which now illumine all those gathering in synagogues, *he* [namely the missing worshiper] *has no gleam*.”

“The realm of the first servant” refers to the early portion of the service, when one should resemble a servant. “The mystery of the second servant” refers to the completion of the *Amidah*, when one should again resemble a servant. See above, note 270.

The name “Benighted Mountain” renders הר נשפה (*har nishpeh*), *a windswept mountain*, which appears in Isaiah 13:2. Rabbi El’azar is probably associating *nishpeh* with נשף (*nesheph*), “darkness,” as in Jeremiah 13:16: הרי נשף (*harei nasheph*), *mountains of darkness*. See Moses de León, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 59.

The Mountains of Darkness appear in rabbinic stories about the campaigns of Alexander the Great and refer there to a region of Africa. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:1; BT *Tamid* 32a–b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:1. Cf. Jeremiah 13:16 (and Rashi and Radak, ad loc.); *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:25; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 24:22; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 10:23; *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 10:2.

On the Mountains of Darkness as the abode of demons (or specifically of Uzza and Aza’el), see *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiva*, 175–76; *Zohar* 1:9b; 2:112b, 191a; 3:208a, 212a, 233a, 249b, 259b, *ZḤ* 81a–b (*MhN, Rut*). On the

combination of *har nishpeh* and Mountains of Darkness in a demonic context, see Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 4:22.

282. **the spirit of prophecy has settled upon you!** See BT *Bava Batra* 12a, in the name of Rabbi Avdimi from Haifa: "Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to the wise."

283. **Lion, son of a lion…** Namely Rabbi El'azar, son of Rabbi Shim'on, both of whom are bold and fearless masters of Torah. However, unlike lions, they generously share their prey (that is, the wisdom that they grasp).

For Rabbi El'azar's title, "Lion, son of a lion," see JT *Shabbat* 10:5, 12c; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 84b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:24; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 10, p. 190; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:2; *Zohar* 2:15a (*MhN*); 3:261a. Cf. Vol. 7, pp. 388–89, n. 96.

284. **the verse should read אשר הלכו (*asher halekhu*), *have gone*** Since according to Rabbi El'azar, the word חשכים (*ḥashekhim*) functions as the subject of this clause (meaning *darknesses*), the verb should be in the plural—הלכו (*halekhu*), *have gone*—not in the singular: הלך (*halakh*), *has gone*.

285. **Because they begin in union…** Since the demonic couple quickly separates, the singular verb *halakh* (*has gone*) is immediately followed by a plural noun: *ḥashekhim* (*darknesses*).

Cf. the riddle of the old donkey-driver in *Zohar* 2:95a: "Who is a serpent that flies in the air, moving in separation, while an ant lies comfortably between its teeth? Beginning in union, it ends in separation."

286. רוח סערה באה (*Ruaḥ se'arah ba'ah*), ***A wind, a storm, she comes…*** The simple sense of the verse is *A stormy wind* [or: *a windstorm*] *coming…*, but Rabbi El'azar construes this as *A wind, a storm, she comes*. The double subject alludes to the male and female demonic forces; but

they immediately separate, as the female leaves the male: *she comes*.

See Moses de León, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 59. On the demonic interpretation of this verse from Ezekiel's vision, see above, note 210. The full verse reads: *I looked, and here*, רוח סערה (*ruaḥ se'arah*), *a windstorm* [or: *a stormy wind*], *coming* [or: *she comes*] *from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a radiance surrounding it; and from within it, like the color of amber, from within the fire*.

As mentioned above (note 253), after quoting Numbers 22:6 at the opening of this passage, the *Zohar* does not refer to the verse again (until further below, beginning at note 346). The verse reads (in part): *Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land*. The clause *I will be able to strike against it* renders אוכל נכה בו (*ukhal nakkeh bo*), which combines the singular form *ukhal* (*I can*) and the plural form *nakkeh* (*we will strike*). Rabbi El'azar refers to similar supposed switches here: *Darknesses has gone*; and *A wind, a storm, she comes*. Below (at note 351), Rabbi El'azar explains the switch from *ukhal* (*I can*) to *nakkeh* (*we will strike*). According to a note here in the Mantua edition, there is probably material missing (following "and immediately they separate"). Perhaps the material below (at notes 346–55 or further) originally appeared here. See *Ateret Tsevi*.

On the wording *ukhal nakkeh bo*, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 1:26; Numbers 22:6 (p. 126b); Song of Songs 1:4; Rashi on Numbers 22:6; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:26; Naḥmanides, Ḥizzequni, and Sforno on Numbers 22:6.

287. ***Balak* [*son of Zippor*] *saw…*** The full verse reads: *Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites*. For the context, see above, p. 232, n. 1.

288. **Surely, what Rabbi Ḥiyya said…** Rabbi El'azar is referring to an earlier interpretation of the name of Balak's father—צפור (*Tsippor*), Zippor—which means "bird."

See above, pp. 233–34 at nn. 2–7, where the speaker, however, is Rabbi Shim'on. Rabbi Ḥiyya appears soon afterward; see p. 238 at n. 19. The passage here is apparently a continuation following p. 244 at n. 36. See *Or Yaqar*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Scholem.

Rabbi El'azar wonders why King David (the Psalmist) would have associated a mere bird (or swallow) with God's holy altars. The verse begins: *Even the bird has found a home* [or: *a house*].

289. **How beloved are souls…** The soul, or spirit, is pictured as a bird. See, e.g., *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, add. 2, 7: "*The sound of the bird arises* (Ecclesiastes 12:4)—this is the soul. Just as a bird flies in the air above, so when a person dies, his soul flies above." See *ZḤ* 13c–d (*MhN*).

The abodes "above" and "below" are the celestial Garden of Eden and the terrestrial one. On these two Gardens, see Sachs Shmueli, "Seder Gan Eden," 224–37.

290. **The Garden of Eden has three walls…** Surrounding the Garden. Souls and spirits who have not yet gained access to the Garden circumambulate these walls.

On the three walls of the Garden, see above, note 64. On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*]."

291. **There are designated days…** During the months of Nisan (when *Pesaḥ* occurs) and Tishrei (when Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and *Sukkot* occur), these souls appear on top of the walls as birds, able now to see into the Garden.

On the image of birds chirping on the walls, cf. Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 153. On Nisan and Tishrei, cf. above, p. 244, n. 36.

292. **engaged in *mitsvot* and precepts…** Pertaining to the various holidays of Nisan and Tishrei.

293. **This is the holy soul…** The term דרור (*deror*), *swallow*, can also mean "release, liberation." The holy soul ascends to the Higher Garden of Eden, where she finds liberation. See *ZḤ* 61b (*MhN*, *ShS*).

On the double sense of *deror*, see *Zohar* 2:183a. On the concluding quotation (*no eye has seen*…), see above, note 290.

294. **all this pertains to the Lower Garden of Eden…** In which the spirits of the righteous dwell, entering their individual abodes and afterward emerging, "for they roam and appear so,"—that is, as birds on the walls of the Garden.

For various interpretations of "entering and afterward emerging," see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Scholem. On the individual accommodations for each righteous person in Paradise, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; 27:1; BT *Shabbat* 152a, *Bava Metsi'a* 83b, *Bava Batra* 75a (quoted in the following note); *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:1; *Rut Rabbah* 3:4; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 9; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 31, 145a; *Shemot Rabbah* 52:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 34:2.

295. **each of them is scorched by the canopy of his fellow…** This image derives from BT *Bava Batra* 75a: "Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, '… The blessed Holy One will fashion a canopy for each and every [righteous] person befitting his honor.' … Rabbi Ḥanina said, '… Each one will be scorched by the canopy of his fellow. Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!'"

According to some commentators this "scorching" implies envy. The Munich manuscript of the Talmud reads: "Each one's canopy will be scorched by the canopy of his fellow." See above, p. 217, n. 93.

As mentioned above (note 293), the word דרור (*deror*) can mean both "swallow" and "release, liberation." The phrase "three times a year" likely alludes to *Pesaḥ*, *Shavu'ot*, and *Sukkot*.

The link between the Messiah and a bird's nest appears in a midrashic comment on Deuteronomy 22:6–7: *If a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way, in any tree or on the ground—fledglings or eggs—and the mother crouching over the fledglings or over the eggs, do not take the mother together with the children. Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself, so that it may go well with you and you will prolong your days*. According to *Devarim Rabbah* 6:7: "If you fulfill this *mitsvah*, you hasten the coming of King Messiah." Thus, the Messiah emerges from (fulfilling the *mitsvah* of) the *bird's nest*!

On the Bird's Nest, see *Zohar* 2:7b–9a; *ZḤ* 61b (*MhN, ShS*); [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 269, 275, 288 (132–33, 136).

296. ***Where she sets her fledglings…*** The subject *she* alludes to righteous souls who teach their sons Torah—including both Written and Oral Torah, which are pictured as two altars. The merit of these learned sons adorns their fathers in the Garden of Eden.

On a deceased father's soul being rewarded for his son's wisdom or virtuous conduct, see above, p. 132, n. 238. For the full verse in Psalms, see above at note 288.

297. **utter your words…** Rabbi Shim'on urges his son, Rabbi El'azar, to expound Torah. The merit of El'azar's wisdom guarantees that his father will be adorned in the Garden of Eden, appearing there "without shame." On the theme of entering the afterlife without shame, see above, note 108.

298. **Rabbi El'azar opened as before…** With the same verse that he quoted previously (above at note 288). Now he identifies *the bird* with Jethro (Moses' father-in-law), and *the swallow* with Jethro's sons (or descendants), who found *a nest* for themselves in the Chamber of Hewn Stone—that is, they became members of the Sanhedrin, which met in this special chamber of the Temple.

See *Zohar* 1:9a. On the notion that Jethro's sons became members of the Sanhedrin, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; BT *Sotah* 11a, *Sanhedrin* 104a, 106a; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 4, *Vayaqhel* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:9. On their devotion to Torah, see Vol. 8, pp. 287–88, n. 6.

The association of צפור (*tsippor*), *the bird*, with Jethro recalls the name of his daughter: צפורה (*Tsipporah*), Zipporah.

299. **they journeyed and encamped in the desert…** See Judges 1:16: *The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah to the desert of Judah, which lies in the Negeb* [or: *south*] *of Arad, and they went and dwelt with the people*. Based on Deuteronomy 34:3, *the City of Palms* is identified with Jericho.

On Jethro as *the Kenite*, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:1; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 35; BT *Berakhot* 63b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 11; *Zohar* 1:28b (*TZ*); 2:195a; 3:9a, 121b. On the Kenites, see the following note. On Jethro's children leaving Jericho to study Torah in the desert, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 2; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Sifrei Zuta*, Numbers 10:29; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 4.

300. ***And the swallow* קן (*qen*), *a nest*…** Rabbi El'azar plays with קן (*qen*), *a nest*, and הקני (*ha-Qeni*), *the Kenite*(*s*). Since *the swallow* alludes to Jethro's descendants (see above at note 298), who were Kenites, it is fitting that the verse reads *and the swallow* קן (*qen*), *a nest*—alluding to הקני (*ha-Qeni*), *the Kenites*. Thus, "all is one."

Similarly, צפור (*tsippor*), *the bird*, and דרור (*deror*), *the swallow*, share the same category, so again "all is one." In fact, in rabbinic Hebrew צפור דרור (*tsippor deror*) is a single term, denoting "the house sparrow" or "a free bird," who lives in the house as well as in the field.

The Kenites were a tribe of migratory metalsmiths who were annexed to Judah. The verse in Judges mentions *Heber the Kenite*, who headed a tribal unit of Kenites.

Although the same chapter of Judges (4:11) describes Heber as a descendant of Jethro (or Hobab), rabbinic sources list *Heber* as one of Jethro's many names. See Vol. 8, p. 287, n. 5.

According to the verse in Samuel, King Saul gave the Kenites friendly warning before attacking the Amalekites, who generations earlier had attacked the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. (See Exodus 17:8–16; and Deuteronomy 25:17–18.) The full verse reads: *Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, turn away, come down from amidst the Amalekites, lest I sweep you away together with them, for you did kindness to all the Children of Israel when they came up from Egypt."* In Samuel, the nature of this *kindness* is uncertain; but according to rabbinic sources it refers to Jethro the Kenite's *kindness* in hosting Moses (who was equivalent to all of Israel) in Midian (see Exodus 2). See Vol. 8, p. 287, n. 5.

301. ***Balak son of Zippor...*** When the Bible mentions a non-Israelite king, it usually does not record his father's name. Here, *Balak son of* צפור (*Tsippor*), *Zippor*, alludes to Balak's noble ancestor, Jethro, who is known as *Tsippor, the bird*. See above, note 298. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, p. 232, n. 1.

On Jethro abandoning idolatry and joining Israel, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1–2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:27; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:11; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 11, *Yitro* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Yitro* 5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 35, 161a; 40, 167b; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:32; *Zohar* 2:13b, 67b–68a, 69a; 3:121b–122a. Cf. Exodus 2:16; 3:1; 18:1 (all describing him as *priest of Midian*). According to the rabbinic sources, Jethro was persecuted and banished before (and not after) he met Moses and eventually joined Israel.

302. **Balak was one of his descendants...** Although Balak was descended from Jethro, he abandoned the true worship of God. When the elders of Midian and Moab saw

this, they crowned him as king. The description *Balak son of Zippor* indicates how unbefitting it was for Balak to forsake the righteous ways of his ancestor Jethro, who is known as *Tsippor, the bird*.

The notion that Balak was descended from Jethro does not appear in rabbinic sources. On the significance of the phrase *at that time*, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:4; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 22:4; Rashi on Numbers 22:4; below, note 401.

303. ***Balak saw...*** The verse reads: *Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites*. But since Balak was not present when Israel defeated the Amorites, the verse should read *Balak heard*. However, he *saw* a vision.

The clause "he was destined to fall into the hand of Israel" probably refers to the defeat of the Moabites by King David. (See 2 Samuel 8:2; above, p. 283, n. 104). The description "Israel first falling into his hands" would then refer to "the affair of Peor," when many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites died in a plague, aside from those who were slain by the Israelite officers.

Alternatively, Rabbi El'azar could be referring to the defeat of the Moabites by the Israelites, led by Ehud son of Gera. The description "Israel first falling into his hands" would then refer to the preceding Moabite rule over the Israelites. (See Judges 3:12–30.)

304. ***If you do not know, O fairest of women...*** According to the midrashic reading, the shepherd and the maiden in Song of Songs represent God and the Assembly of Israel. In the *Zohar*, Assembly of Israel is identified with *Shekhinah*. She is addressed here as *fairest of women*.

Rabbi Abba equates the term כנישתא (*kenishta*), "assembly," with עצרת (*atseret*), "convocation, assembly." The

sense of “gathering” pertains to *Shekhinah*, who gathers the flow of all the other *sefirot*.

In rendering the biblical term *atseret* (in Leviticus 23:36 and Numbers 29:35), both *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi* employ the root כנש (*knsh*), “to gather.” On *atseret* as כנישו (*kenishu*), “gathering,” see *Zohar* 1:64a; 3:104b. Cf. *Zohar* 2:187a; 3:96b, 259b (below, p. 658, n. 475). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

The context in Song of Songs (1:7–8) reads: *“Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your sheep? Where do you rest them at noon? Lest I be as one who strays* [or: *as one enwrapped*] *among the flocks of your fellows.” “If you do not know, O fairest of women, go follow the tracks of the sheep, and graze your kids by the shepherds’ tents.”* See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:17a–b.

The verse in Numbers, describing the journeying of the tribes in the wilderness, reads: *The banner of the camp of the children of Dan journeyed on*, מאסף (*me’asseph*), *the rear guard, for all the camps by their divisions*. Here, Rabbi Abba understands *me’asseph* hyperliterally as *gatherer*. See *Zohar* 3:64b.

305. **And you might say, *'Atseret…*** This term applies to *Shekhinah* in another sense as well, based on the meaning of the root עצר (*'tsr*), “to hold back, restrain, lock up.” Because *Shekhinah* is entirely faithful to Her beloved (*Tif’eret*), She receives the sefirotic flow freely. However, on account of humanity’s unfaithfulness and unworthiness, *Shekhinah* restrains the flow, “so that it descends only… drop by drop.”

The full verse in Genesis reads: *For YHVH had shut fast* [or: *locked up*] *every womb in the house of Abimelech on account of Sarah, Abraham’s wife*.

306. **For if She would discover faith…** If *Shekhinah* would discover faithfulness and virtue among those on earth, She would pour forth unrestrainedly. Furthermore,

She would be blessed with additional gifts of emanation from above. However, those who act faithlessly on earth in effect restrain the additional flow from above to *Shekhinah* and restrain Her from conveying the flow to all those below.

On human misconduct diminishing the flow to *Shekhinah*, see, e.g., *Zohar* 1:67a; 3:266a–b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:425. Cf. below, note 431.

307. **I learned from the Holy Lamp…** From Rabbi Shim'on.

When *Shekhinah* ascends to gather the rich flow, if Israel is tainted by unworthy deeds, then *Shekhinah* Herself becomes tainted, as if by a tiny drop of menstrual blood. Consequently, She is removed from Her Husband, *Tif'eret*, and sits in a state of impurity until seven "clean" (i.e., bloodless) days have passed.

See BT *Berakhot* 31a, in the name of Rabbi Zeira: "The daughters of Israel have been so strict with themselves that even if they see a drop of [menstrual] blood the size of a mustard seed they wait on account of it [literally "sit over it"] for seven clean days."

See JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 8d; BT *Megillah* 28b, *Niddah* 66a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Higger) 52. On the image of "a drop of blood the size of a mustard seed," see also BT *Niddah* 5a, 13b, 16b; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 16, p. 79.

On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see *Zohar* 3:54a, 79a–b, 248b, 258b, 290b (*IZ*); Koren, *Forsaken*, 73–97; cf. above, p. 200, n. 41. On Rabbi Shim'on's title "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68.

308. **the Left is aroused…** The power of *Din* (Judgment) is aroused, symbolized by Isaac, the subject of the verse in Genesis: *It happened when Isaac was old, that his eyes were too dim to see, and he called Esau, his elder son, and said to him, "My son!" He answered, "Here I am."* Whereas previously God gazed upon *Shekhinah* benevolently —"by the principle of Abraham," namely *Ḥesed*—now the divine eyes grow too *dim* to gaze with Compassion. Then,

Samael (symbolized by Esau) is aroused, threatening the world.

The image of a thread extending from *Din* represents the counterpart of "a thread of *ḥesed*." See below, pp. 501–2, n. 5. On the image of demonic forces controlling a ship in the stormy seas, see above, note 235. "Convulsed" renders ערטיראן (*artiran*), apparently based playfully on the root ערער (*ʿrʿr*), "to undermine, upset, demolish." See above, p. 140, n. 266.

The demonic forces under the command of Samael are called *depths of the sea*. This phrase appears in Micah 7:19: *You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*. See above, p. 72, n. 54.

309. **all of Israel's sins and transgressions He gives to [Samael]...** Just as on Yom Kippur the scapegoat bearing all of Israel's sins is sent off to the desert to the demon Azazel. See above, note 20.

310. **Now, are the sins of Israel...** Why would the demonic forces wish to distribute Israel's sins to their respective nations? Rabbi Abba explains that these forces mistakenly think that the sins are precious gifts.

311. ***Black am I but beautiful...*** According to the Midrash on Song of Songs, this verse is spoken by the Assembly of Israel. Here, the speaker is *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who shares Her people's exile and longs to be reunited with Her lover, the blessed Holy One. Yearning for Him so deeply, She shrivels into a single black point. See above, p. 288, n. 119.

In the passage from Song of Songs, the word איכה (*eikhah*) means *where*, but Rabbi Abba construes it as *how* (as soon becomes clear). The double appearance of *eikhah* alludes to the destruction of the two Temples—by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., and by the Romans in 70 C.E. The clause "when everyone exclaims, '*Eikhah, How?*'" alludes to the book of Lamentations (*Eikhah*), which commemorates the destruction of the First Temple and features the word *eikhah*

several times—most famously in its opening verse, mourning the desolation of Jerusalem: *How does she sit alone, the city once full of people?* The wording of the clause—"when everyone exclaims [or: recites], '*Eikhah, How?*'"—could also allude to the liturgical chanting of the book of *Eikhah* (Lamentations) on *Tish'ah be-Av*. See *ZḤ* 70c (*ShS*).

The context in Song of Songs (1:5–8) reads: "*Black* [or: *Dark*] *am I but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem—like the tents of Kedar, like Solomon's curtains. Do not stare* [or: *look*] *at me for being blackish* [or: *for I am blackish*], *for the sun has scorched* [or: *glared at; gazed upon*] *me. My mother's sons were incensed at me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have not kept. Tell me, you whom my soul loves,* איכה (*eikhah*), *where, do you pasture your sheep? Eikhah, Where, do you rest them at noon? Lest I be as one who strays* [or: *as one enwrapped*] *among the flocks of your fellows*." "*If you do not know, O fairest of women, go follow the tracks of the sheep, and graze your kids by the shepherds' tents*."

312. **תרעה (*Tir'eh*), *You pasture*; תרביץ (*tarbits*), *you rest them*...** The two verbs are each distinct, and Rabbi Abba proceeds to discuss each one. First he wonders why the verse reads תרעה (*Tir'eh*), *You pasture*, and תרביץ (*tarbits*), *you rest them*—and not ירעה (*yir'eh*), *he pastures*, and ירביץ (*yarbits*), *he rests them*—since *Shekhinah* is speaking about the nation of Israel and asking, in effect: "How will he pasture and rest his children?"

Rabbi Abba explains that *Shekhinah* is actually speaking to *Tif'eret* about Herself, and the prefixed ת (*tav*) in each of these two verbs does not signify *you* but rather *she*—איכה תרעה (*Eikhah tir'eh*), *How does she* [namely *Shekhinah, Tif'eret*'s Bride] *pasture*, Her children in exile? איכה תרביץ (*Eikhah tarbits*), *How does she sprinkle them*, with the dew of blessing to assuage their hot suffering? Rabbi Abba construes *tarbits* based on an

alternative rabbinic sense of the verb הרבץ (*hirbits*), "to sprinkle." See *Zohar* 3:17b.

313. ***Lest I be as one enwrapped…*** The verse reads: *Lest I be* כעטיה (*ke-oteyah*), *as one who strays* [or: *as one enwrapped*—looking like a harlot], *among the flocks of your fellows*. Here, Rabbi Abba adopts the meaning *as one enwrapped*, describing a state of mourning.

Although the nations taunt Israel, the suffering people respond proudly, insisting that *Shekhinah* will sustain them. But She is powerless, suffering in exile along with Her people, *as one enwrapped*.

The initial word, כה (*koh*), *thus*, in each of the expressions כה תרעה (*koh tir'eh*), *Thus she will pasture*, and כה תרבץ (*koh tarbits*), *Thus she will sprinkle*, represents the second syllable of the full word איכה (*eikhah*), *how* (or *where*). Rabbi Abba may be construing *koh* as a name of *Shekhinah*. See above, note 148; cf. *Eikhah Rabbah* (ed. Buber) 1:1; Vol. 5, p. 313, n. 345.

On the nations' taunt, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:7: "The star-worshipers taunt Israel, saying to them: 'Your God has hidden His face from you and removed His presence from you. He will not return to you.'" See *Zohar* 2:188b; 3:220b–221b; Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 16–18.

On *ke-oteyah* as *as one enwrapped*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 139; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:7; *Zohar* 1:20a; 3:17b; *ZḤ* 52c, 70c (*ShS*), 71a (*ShS*).

314. **He replies to Her…** *Tif'eret* reassures *Shekhinah* that She can fortify Herself to sustain Her people through the merit of children who study Torah.

See *Leqaḥ Tov*, Song of Songs 1:8; *Zohar* 3:17b, 198a; cf. *ZḤ* 70d (*ShS*). According to BT *Shabbat* 119b (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince), "The world endures only for the sake of the breath of schoolchildren." See *Zohar* 1:1b, 47a, 146b (*ST*); 2:39a; 3:47b.

For the context in Song of Songs, see above, note 311. The verse begins: אם לא תדעי לך (*Im lo tede'i lakh*), *If you do not*

know, which Rabbi Abba construes hyperliterally as *If you do not know for yourself*.

315. ***And graze your kids…*** That is, draw on the merit of little babies still of nursing age who tragically died. Their souls ascend to the Supreme Academy, where they are taught by God Himself. This academy is situated even higher than the Academy of Metatron, which is occupied by the souls of the righteous and learned. Such virtuous humans serve as *shepherds* of the people, and their academy is called *the shepherds' tents*.

The concluding sentence implies that the adults are pictured as *sheep* (tended by the righteous and learned *shepherds*), while the children (who follow in their parents' footsteps) are considered *the tracks of the sheep* (as mentioned in the preceding paragraph).

On God (or an angel) teaching the souls of little children, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b (and Rashi, s.v. *gemulei me-ḥalav*); *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:353); *Kallah Rabbati* 2:9; *Zohar* 1:41a (*Heikh*); 2:96b, 113b, 169b; *ZḤ* 36b; [Moses de León?], *Seder Gan Eden*, 280–81 (134–35); Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 163–65.

On Metatron as teaching in, or heading, an academy in heaven, see above, p. 134, n. 245. On the distinction between the Academy of Metatron and the Supreme Academy, see above, p. 67, n. 43. On this paragraph and the following one, see Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 53–54; Liebes, "Ha-Zohar ke-Sefer Halakhah," 588–97.

On *kids* (that is, young goats or sheep) as children, see BT *Shabbat* 33b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:8; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:4. The phrase "taken from the breast" derives from Isaiah 28:9: *Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he explain a message? Those weaned from milk, taken from the breast?*

316. ***The tracks of the sheep*** **are the students of the academy…** Disciples who appear later in the world, after Torah has already been explained and established "on

a straight path.” Following in the footsteps of earlier sages, they find that “the path is open,” and they are able to “renew ancient words” and discover new meanings within Torah.

The phrase מחדשין מלין עתיקין (*meḥaddeshin millin attiqin*), “renew ancient words,” can also be rendered “innovate ancient words,” alluding to the *Zohar*’s unique method of “inventing” new-ancient teachings and transmitting them through classical Talmudic figures. See *Zohar* 2:147a (Vol. 5, p. 336, n. 410); Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 17–18. Cf. above, p. 145, n. 282. On the related phrase “new-ancient words,” see above, p. 97, n. 135; Matt, “‘New-Ancient Words.’”

On *the tracks of the sheep* as alluding to kabbalists, see *ZḤ* 70d (*ShS*). Cf. Vol. 7, p. 107, n. 326. The full verse in Malachi reads: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another; and YHVH listened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written in His presence concerning those who revere YHVH and contemplate His name*. On this verse as referring to God listening to those engaged in Torah, see M *Avot* 3:2, 6; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:12; *Rut Rabbah* 4:5; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 7, *Emor* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 23; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:5.

317. **all is one matter** The two interpretations of *the tracks of the sheep* (offered respectively by Rabbi Abba and Rabbi El’azar) both refer to those who are engaged in Torah.

318. **why *for yourself*?…** Because *Shekhinah*, who shares in Israel’s exile, can help Herself (as explained above, notes 314–15).

On the wording *for yourself*, see above, note 314. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 14, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: “Wherever Israel went in exile, *Shekhinah*, as it were, went into exile with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, *Shekhinah* went into exile with them.… When they were exiled to Babylon, *Shekhinah* went into exile with

them.... And when in the future they return, *Shekhinah*, as it were, will return with them."

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 84; JT *Ta'anit* 1:1, 64a; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:54; BT *Megillah* 29a; *Zohar* 1:68b–69a, 120b, 134a, 149a, 159b, 182a, 210a, 211a, 237a; 2:2a–b, 41b (*Piq*), 82a, 189b, 191a, 216b; 3:4b, 6a–b, 17a–b, 66a, 74a–75a, 90b, 102b, 114b–115a, 297b; *ZḤ* 48a, 51d, 84a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 122–23; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 73–74 (92–93); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:382–85.

In the Masoretic text of Isaiah, the word *lo* is spelled לא, with an א (*alef*), meaning *not*—which could yield the sense *In all their distress* צר לא (*lo tsar*), *He was not distressed*. However, the word is traditionally read as לו (*lo*), with a ו (*vav*), yielding exactly the opposite sense: *In all their distress* צר לו (*lo tsar*), *He was distressed*. See *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 14; BT *Sotah* 31a; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:5; *Zohar* 1:120b; 2:165a; 3:203b, 219b; Rashi, Radak and *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.

319. ***Black am I...*** See above, note 311.

320. **She bestows kindness upon Her children secretly...** On the interplay of *Shekhinah* and the blessed Holy One, see *Zohar* 2:190b: "Even though He threatens and raises the lash, Mother comes and grasps His right arm, so the lash remains suspended, does not descend, and is not implemented, because both of them share one plan: He by threatening, and She by holding back His right arm."

321. **I am surprised by what is written...** How could loving parents bring their child to court to have him killed?

On the unlikelihood of such an occurrence, see BT *Sanhedrin* 71a: "There has never been [an actual judicial proceeding involving] *a wayward and rebellious son*, and there never will be one. So why was [this passage] written? Interpret [it] and receive a reward!" See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 11:6.

Rabbi Abba indicates that God instructed Moses to record this law. The context in Deuteronomy (21:18–21) reads: *If a man has a wayward* [or: *stubborn*] *and rebellious son, who does not heed his father's voice and his mother's voice, and they punish him and he does not heed them, his father and his mother shall seize him and bring him out to the elders of his town and to the gate of his place, and they shall say to the elders of his town, "This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not heed our voice, is a glutton and a drunk." All the people of his town shall stone him to death, and you shall eliminate the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear and be afraid*.

322. **Moses saw from afar...** He foresaw that Israel would act like *a wayward and rebellious son*, and that God would punish them accordingly; so he wanted God to omit this passage from the Torah.

323. **Write and receive a reward!...** Interpret Scripture and discover! These two statements are based on the rabbinic formulation quoted above (note 321): "Why was [this passage] written? Interpret [it] and receive a reward!"

God tells Moses that He Himself will judge Israel, as indicated by the following elucidation of this biblical passage.

324. **Yofiel, the master of Torah...** Yofiel (Beauty of God) is the angelic prince of Torah. He begins to interpret for Moses the passage *If a man has a wayward and rebellious son*....

The verse in Exodus demonstrates that God can be called *a man*. For similar instances of the proof text *a man of war*, see above, p. 153, n. 4.

On the angel Yofiel, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 34:6; Schäfer, *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, s.v. *Yofi'el*; *Zohar* 1:108a (*ST*); 2:206b, 247b (*Heikh*); 3:2b, 154a; *ZḤ* 36b, 61c (*MhN*, *ShS*), 64a, 90c (*MhN*, *Rut*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 65–67.

325. ***For like a wayward cow…*** The verse reads: *For like a wayward* [or: *stubborn*] *cow, Israel has been wayward* [or: *stubborn*].

326. **the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel** Who are described as *father* and *mother*.

This interpretation of *father* and *mother* is based on a passage in BT *Berakhot* 35b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa: "Whoever enjoys this world without reciting a blessing—it is as if he robs the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, as is said: *He who robs his father and mother and says, 'It is no crime,' is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24)—*father* is none other than the blessed Holy One… and *mother* is none other than Assembly of Israel."

In this Talmudic passage, Assembly of Israel apparently refers to a supernal hypostasis (the mother of Israel), as it does regularly in Kabbalah, designating *Shekhinah*. Here, Rabbi Abba indicates that *your father* is *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One), while *your mother* is *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). This divine couple engenders souls. See *Zohar* 3:44b, 74a; Vol. 8, pp. 266–67, n. 57. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

327. ***YHVH sent a message…*** The context in 2 Kings (17:13–14, 18, 20) reads: *YHVH warned Israel and Judah by every prophet, every seer, saying, "Turn back from your wicked ways…." And they did not heed, and they stiffened their necks…. YHVH was greatly incensed at Israel and He removed them from His presence…. YHVH spurned all the seed of Israel, and He afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He flung them from His presence*.

328. ***and they did not heed YHVH*** As indicated in the preceding note, the passage in 2 Kings reads: *and they did not heed*.

329. **with a single mind…** The blessed Holy One and *Shekhinah* concur on punishing Israel.

330. **the verse should read *to the elders of their town*…** According to the simple sense of the verse, *his town* means "the town of the wayward and rebellious son," but here the angel Yofiel suggests that the possessive pronoun should be in the plural (*their*), matching *his father and his mother*. He explains, however, that *his town* means "the town of the blessed Holy One," and *his place* means "the place of *Shekhinah* (who is known as Assembly of Israel)."

331. ***The elders of his town*—Primordial Days…** The *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, pictured as the six primordial days of Creation.

The phrase "*musaf* [the additional service] of Sabbath" apparently alludes here to *Shekhinah*, who is *the gate* to the sefirotic realm. See *Zohar* 2:206a (Vol. 6, pp. 173–74, n. 195). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

332. **even though all know the judgment…** Although all of the *sefirot* know that Israel deserves to be judged and punished, *Shekhinah* (pictured as the Divine Court) must recuse Herself from the case, since She is Israel's Mother "and no relative can try the case of his relation."

333. **What is written first?…** In this biblical passage, verse 19 reads: *They shall bring him out to the elders of his town and to the gate of his place*. The following verse reads: *They shall say to the elders of his town, "This son of ours is wayward and rebellious…."* Of course (according to the simple meaning), it would make no sense for the verse to read *They shall say to the elders of his town and to the gate of his place*. However, the angel Yofiel insists that Scripture deleted any mention of *the gate of his place* to demonstrate that God "removed the trial from" *Shekhinah* (who is *the gate*

of his place). The judgment is conducted by *the elders of his town* alone, namely by the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*.

334. ***This son of ours…*** Israel alone (and no other nation) is the son of the blessed Holy One and *Shekhinah*.

335. **why the change?…** At first the passage describes the son as *a wayward and rebellious son, who does not heed his father's voice and his mother's voice*. But then, when his parents bring him to court, they say "*This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not heed our voice, is a glutton and a drunk*." Why the added element of being *a glutton and a drunk?* Because such behavior causes Israel to be *wayward and rebellious*.

The passage in Numbers describes how the Israelites rejected God at Shittim by *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and then worshiping the Moabites' false gods. Numbers 25:2 reads in full: *They* [namely *the daughters of Moab*] *called* [or: *invited*] *the people to the sacrifices for their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods*.

336. ***All the people of his town shall stone him…*** This alludes to the nations attacking Israel and destroying Jerusalem and the Temple. Yet these enemies failed to eliminate Israel.

337. **When Moses heard this…** Once the angel Yofiel told him the deep meaning of this passage on the *wayward and rebellious son*, Moses recorded it in the Torah.

338. **Nevertheless, *O fairest of women*…** Rabbi Abba returns to the verse in Song of Songs. Even though *Shekhinah* is languishing in exile among Her people, She is still the *fairest of women*.

On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, beginning at note 304. On *the tracks of the sheep*, see above at notes 314–16.

339. **schoolchildren…** Cf. above, notes 314–15.

340. **משכנות הרעים (*mishkenot ha-ro'im*), *the shepherds' tents*, lacking a ו (*vav*)…** The word הָרֹעִים (*ha-ro'im*), *the shepherds*, spelled without a ו (*vav*), can be read הָרָעִים (*ha-*

ra'im), *the wicked ones*, as if referring to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:8. Cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 2:4. On the pasture land in this region, see Numbers 32:1–5. On Sihon and Og, see Numbers 21:21–33; Deuteronomy 4:46–47.

341. **He treats their intentional sins as errors** See BT *Yoma* 36b: "Moses said before the blessed Holy One, 'Master of the Universe! When Israel sins before You and then performs *teshuvah*, treat their intentional sins as errors.'" Cf. BT *Yoma* 86b; *Midrash Tehillim* 7:1; 77:1.

342. **Rav Hamnuna Sava said...** This distinguished figure discussed the editorial arrangement of a section of the Mishnah.

The beginning of the Mishnah's fourth "order," *Neziqin* (Damages), deals primarily with monetary subjects and damages. The first three tractates of *Neziqin* are named *Bava Qamma* (First Gate), *Bava Metsi'a* (Middle Gate), and *Bava Batra* (Last Gate). These three originally constituted a single tractate called *Neziqin*.

Bava Qamma opens with a list of four classifications of damage: "There are four primary causes of damage: the ox, the pit, the crop-destroying beast, and the outbreak of fire." *Bava Metsi'a* opens with a discussion of a lost garment that has been found. *Bava Batra* begins with a chapter entitled *Ha-Shuttafin* (The Partners, or The Joint Owners) and includes discussion of lost deeds.

Here Rav Hamnuna Sava is cited as having associated the subject matter of these three Mishnaic "gates" with the tradition that God "treats Israel's intentional sins as errors." The goring ox (mentioned at the beginning of *Bava Qamma*) represents intentional sin, whereas the lost objects (mentioned in *Bava Metsi'a* and *Bava Batra*) correspond to errors. On Rav Hamnuna Sava, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

343. **Those who arranged our Mishnah in three gates…** All three tractates (or "gates")—as well as the tradition that God treats Israel's intentional sins as errors—are alluded to in the verse from Exodus. This verse, which deals with a case of misappropriation, reads in full: *In every matter of* פשע (*pesha*), *offense* [or: *misappropriation*; *breach of trust*; *transgression*], *for an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep, for a cloak, for every loss about which one says, "This is it," the matter of both shall come before God* [or: *the gods*]. *He whom God finds guilty shall pay double to his fellow*.

The term *pesha* (*transgression*) alludes to an intentional sin that is now considered by God to be "not intentional." The phrase *for an ox* alludes to the beginning of *Bava Qamma*, which specifies the ox as one of the four primary causes of damage. The phrase *for a cloak* alludes to the beginning of *Bava Metsi'a*, which discusses a lost garment that has been found. The phrase *for every loss* alludes to *Bava Batra*, which includes a discussion of lost deeds. See the preceding note. (Actually, lost items are discussed much more extensively in *Bava Metsi'a*.)

344. **They followed the pattern of Scripture…** That is, the wording of the verse in Exodus (as explained in the preceding note).

As mentioned in the preceding two notes, *Bava Metsi'a* opens with a discussion of a lost garment that has been found. Rav Hamnuna Sava concludes that the arrangement of the "three gates" in the Mishnah was ordained by God at Mount Sinai.

345. **Why is it that with all the prophets…** Why does the formula *Thus says YHVH* appear only regarding later prophets and not regarding Moses? Because the word כה (*koh*), *thus*, is a name of *Shekhinah*, who is also known as "the speculum that does not shine." Whereas the other prophets received inspiration from *Shekhinah*, Moses received inspiration directly from *Tif'eret*, "the speculum that shines."

The word “speculum” renders אספקלריא (*ispaqlarya*), “speculum, glass, mirror, lens,” deriving from Greek *speklon*, “mirror, window-pane,” and Latin *speculum*, “mirror.” See BT *Yevamot* 49b: “All the prophets gazed באספקלריא שאינה מאירה (*be-ispaqlarya she-einah me’irah*), through an opaque glass [literally: through an *ispaqlarya* that does not shine], whereas Moses our teacher gazed through a translucent glass [literally: through an *ispaqlarya* that shines].”

Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face.” See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:14; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 33–34; Naḥmanides on Exodus 6:2; *Zohar* 1:33b, 120a, 170b–171a, 183a; 2:23b, 82b, 129b, 193b–194a, 221a; 3:268b; *ZḤ* 38b, 41c, 77a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 7; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:44–45, n. 242; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, index, s.v. “speculum”; Huss, “Ḥakham Adif mi-Navi,” 109–14; idem, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi’a*, 17–21.

On *Koh* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, note 148. Actually, the formula *Thus says YHVH* appears numerous times regarding Moses; see Exodus 4:22; 5:1; 7:17, 26; 8:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3; 11:4; 32:27. Cf. *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 12:1; *Sifrei*, Numbers 153; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 83; *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 13:2; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

346. ***Now, please, go curse this people for me…*** The full verse (spoken by Balak to Balaam) reads: *Now, please, go curse this people for me, for it is mightier than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike against it and drive it out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed*. For the context, see above, note 1. See also notes 253, 286.

347. **Surely, the time is ripe…** Balak (king of Moab) said “*Now*” because he foresaw that many Israelite men would be seduced by the daughters of Moab and then

worship the heathen god Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites would die in a plague, aside from those slain by the Israelite officers. The clause “but he did not see accurately” refers to the fact that eventually the Moabites were to be defeated by King David. See 2 Samuel 8:2; above, note 303.

348. **לכה (*Lekhah*), *go…*** Rabbi El’azar wonders why Scripture doesn’t employ the simpler form of the imperative: לך (*lekh*), *go*. He explains that the additional letter, ה (*he*), allows for a different pronunciation and meaning: לכה (*le-Khoh*), *against Koh*—that is, *against Shekhinah* (who is known as *Koh*, “Thus”). (See above, notes 148, 345.) Rabbi El’azar is also construing *lekhah* as a cohortative, that is, a form of the verb that denotes self-encouragement: “Let us quicken ourselves…”

The concluding sentence indicates that Balak’s exclamation *Now, go* echoes the verse in Kings, in which the Moabites urge themselves to seize the spoils of war.

349. **because of that Protector…** Balak realized that *Shekhinah* was protecting Israel, and now he saw an opportunity to attack Her and remove Her from Her people, thereby leaving them vulnerable. Balak and Balaam “shared evil counsel” *against YHVH and against His anointed* (namely Israel). But eventually *Shekhinah* eliminated both of them from the world.

The full verse in Numbers (recording Balaam’s words) reads: *He said to Balak, “Station yourself here by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I myself may be happened upon* [or: *and I myself will be encountered; and I myself will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*]. Here, Rabbi El’azar transforms אקרה כה ואנכי (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon*, into אעקר להוא כה (*e’qar le-hahu koh*), “I will uproot that *Koh*,” that is, “I will eliminate *Shekhinah*,” who protects Israel. See above, note 148.

On *Shekhinah*'s role in eliminating many of the Moabites, see above, p. 283, n. 104. On the demise of Balaam, see Numbers 31:8; Joshua 13:22. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Kings of the earth take their stand, and princes conspire together against YHVH and against His anointed*.

350. ***For it is mightier than I...*** Since Scripture does not record any earlier battles between Moab and Israel, how could Balak know that Israel *is mightier than I*? Rabbi El'azar explains that Balak foresaw King David, who was descended from Ruth the Moabitess and who would one day defeat Moab. Rabbi El'azar construes עצום הוא ממני (*atsum hu mimenni*), *he is mightier than I*, as *he is mighty mimenni, from me*—that is, descended from my people.

351. ***Perhaps* אוכל נכה בו (*ukhal nakkeh bo*), *I will be able, that we can strike against it...*** The simple sense of this clause is *Perhaps I will be able to strike against it*; but the wording אוכל נכה בו (*ukhal nakkeh bo*) combines the singular form *ukhal* (*I can*) and the plural form *nakkeh* (*we will strike*). Rabbi El'azar wonders why both verbs aren't either singular or plural consistently. He explains that Balak was indicating to Balaam that with the latter's help he could prevent King David from ever being born.

The lion symbolizes the tribe of Judah, from whom David (pictured as a paw) was descended. See Genesis 49:9.

On the wording *ukhal nakkeh bo*, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 1:26; Numbers 22:6 (p. 126b); Song of Songs 1:4; Rashi on Numbers 22:6; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:26; Naḥmanides, Ḥizzequni, and Sforno on Numbers 22:6; above, note 286. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 346.

352. **ארה (*Arah*), *Curse*, [*this people*] *for me...*** Rabbi Abba associates the imperative ארה (*arah*), *curse*, with the root ארה (*'rh*), "to gather, pluck." See Song of Songs 5:1; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:7. On the power of a snake's head, see above at note 247.

353. **he dug fifteen hundred cubits…** See JT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 29a: “When [King] David began digging the foundations of the Temple, he dug fifteen hundred cubits without finding the abyss.” When he finally penetrated the abyss, “it rose and threatened to drown the world.” David’s adviser Ahitophel managed to subdue the abyss by reciting a formula (or divine name), upon which David sang the fifteen Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120–134), one psalm for each hundred cubits.

Cf. the tradition in BT *Sukkah* 53a–b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “When David dug the hollows [beneath the site of the Temple], the abyss arose and threatened to drown the world…. [David] inscribed the [Divine] Name on a potsherd and cast it into the abyss, and it subsided sixteen thousand cubits. When he saw that it had subsided so far, he said, ‘The higher it is raised, the more the earth will be watered.’ So he sang the fifteen Ascents and raised it fifteen thousand cubits, leaving it a thousand cubits [below the surface].”

Here David brings up water from the depths and pours a water libation upon the altar. Then he washes out the cauldron of witchcraft, which Balak had stuck in the depths.

On the Talmudic passages quoted above, see *Midrash Shemu’el* 26; Gaster, ed., *Sefer ha-Ma’asiyyot*, 113–14; *Zohar* 1:30b; 2:91b, 152a; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:258, n. 70; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah*, 177–89. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I fling my sandal* [or: *my shoe*]; *over Philistia I shout exultant*. See *Zohar* 1:190a.

354. ***Upon Edom I fling my shoe…*** When King David the Psalmist uttered this verse, he was alluding to something that happened long before—namely to an event in the life of Esau, the progenitor of Edom and symbol of the demonic Other Side. David declared that he would clog the throat of “that swallower.”

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 2:168b; 3:246a (*RM*); *ZḤ* 87b (*MhN, Rut*). For the full verse in Psalms, see the end of the preceding note.

355. ***Over Philistia* אתרועע (*etro'a*), *I shout exultant*...** David "saw" back to the origin of the Philistines in the realm of the demonic Other Side. Rabbi Abba associates the verb אתרועע (*etro'a*), *I shout exultant*, with the root רעע (*r' '*), "to smash."

356. ***righteousness* is equivalent to *faithfulness*...** Both צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*, and אמונה (*emunah*), *faithfulness*, are names of *Shekhinah*.

357. **Ah, but *righteousness* is not like *faithfulness*...** The name צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*, pertains to *Shekhinah* when She is influenced strongly by *Din* (Judgment) on the left side and conveys this harsh quality to the world.

The verse in Isaiah now implies that when *Tif'eret*—also called *Raḥamim* (Compassion) and known as משפט (*Mishpat*), "Justice" (or "Judgment")—joins *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*), the inhabitants of the world can bear the Judgment of *Shekhinah* (who is known as *righteousness*). Then *righteousness* becomes like *faithfulness*.

On the harsh quality of *Shekhinah* as *Tsedeq* (*righteousness*), see *Zohar* 3:80b, 85b, 148a, 292a (*IZ*). On *Shekhinah* as *faith* or *faithfulness*, see *Zohar* 1:19b; 2:214a; 3:17a, 35b; *ZḤ* 82a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 25–26.

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:241b; 3:67b, 80b. The full verse reads: *With my soul I desire You in the night, with my spirit within me I seek You at dawn. For when Your judgments reach the earth, inhabitants of the world learn righteousness*.

358. ***Faithfulness*, when Truth unites with Her...** The name *faithfulness* pertains to *Shekhinah* when *Tif'eret* (known as Truth) joins Her, bringing joy.

Each night during sleep, souls ascend to heaven; and before going to bed, a person should entrust his soul to *Shekhinah*. Based on his unworthy conduct during the day that has just ended, he is burdened by sinful debts and actually deserves to die; but if he entrusts his soul as a pledge, *Shekhinah* treats him mercifully and revives him faithfully the next morning.

According to BT *Berakhot* 5a, Abbaye recommends that each night before going to bed, scholars should recite "a verse of compassion, such as *Into Your hand I entrust my spirit. You redeem me, O YHVH, God of truth* (Psalms 31:6)." Traditionally, this verse is included in the nightly recital of *Shema* before sleep. The verse begins: *Into Your hand I entrust* [or: *commend, commit, deposit*] *my spirit*.

See *Pesiqta Rabbati* 31, 143a; *Zohar* 1:11a, 36b, 183a; 3:119a (Vol. 8, pp. 267–68, n. 63), 120b, 260a; *ZḤ* 18b–c, 89a–b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 53–54; idem, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 11 (104b); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

359. ***the belt of his waist* and *the belt of his loins…*** Apparently, *his waist* alludes to *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* ("above"), while *his loins* allude to *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* ("below"). For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On the image of a woman in labor, see Jeremiah 30:6: *Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor?*

360. **for might and for battle, *righteousness the belt of his waist…*** The harsh aspect of *Shekhinah* (signified by the name *righteousness*) engages mightily in battle. The term גבורה (*gevurah*), "might," apparently refers here to the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, associated with the *waist* (as explained in the preceding note).

The name *faithfulness* pertains to *Shekhinah* when She is united with *Tif'eret*, who is known as *Raḥamim* (Compassion); then She conveys compassionate goodness.

The subject of the verse in Isaiah is the Messiah. With the single rung of *Shekhinah*, "he will judge the world," conveying both of Her aspects: compassion toward Israel and harsh judgment toward the other nations.

361. **Now, you might say...** If *righteousness* signifies the harsh judgment of *Shekhinah*, how can Scripture state *In righteousness you shall judge your fellow*, and *Righteousness, righteousness shall you pursue*? Because, Rabbi Ḥizkiyah explains, a judge should show no partiality toward his friend. Similarly, a merchant should be scrupulously fair in weighing out his merchandise.

Leviticus 19:15 reads in full: *You shall not do wrong in justice. You shall not favor the poor and you shall not defer to the rich; in righteousness you shall judge your fellow*. See M *Ketubbot* 9:2, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: "One should not show compassion in a legal decision."

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: צדק צדק (*Tsedeq, tsedeq*), *Justice, justice* [or: *Righteousness, righteousness*], *shall you pursue*. Leviticus 19:36 reads: מאזני צדק (*Moznei tsedeq*), *Scales of equity* [or: *honest scales*; *just scales*; *scales of righteousness*], *weights of equity... you shall have*.

362. **one rung is divided into two aspects...** *Shekhinah* manifests both harsh judgment and compassion.

On Israel's being "girded" as they left Egypt, see Exodus 12:11 (describing how the people should consume the Passover sacrifice): *Thus shall you eat it: your hips girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is a passover offering to YHVH*.

363. **When they took counsel...** When Balak and Balaam conspired against Israel, Balak sought to separate Israel from their rung, *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by *the land*). Thereby, they would be left vulnerable, and Balak could attack them as he wished. Balak relied on his own power of sorcery and on Balaam's power of cursing.

On Israel's oral power, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:10; *Tanḥuma, Beshallaḥ* 9; *Midrash Tehillim* 22:20; *Zohar* 1:177b–178a; 2:139a.

364. ***For I know…*** How did Balak know that Balaam's utterances were so effective? Because Sihon king of the Amorites had hired Balaam to curse an earlier king of Moab, which enabled Sihon to vanquish that king and seize his land.

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah adds, however, that the wording *For I know* alludes to Balak's sorcerous and astrological knowledge. See above, page 297.

For the tradition that Sihon hired Balaam to curse Moab, see *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 24, Balak 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 54; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:30. The full verse in Numbers 21 reads: *For Heshbon is the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and he had fought against the former* [or: *first*] *king of Moab and seized all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon*.

365. **Why is blessing required here…** Why did Balak mention blessing, given that he wanted Balaam to curse Israel?

366. **Well, there is something here…** A deeper meaning to the verse. Grammatically, the word et is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. Although this little word seems superfluous, already in rabbinic times Nahum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that its presence in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, את (*et*) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from א (*alef*) to ת (*tav*). *Shekhinah* needs Israel's blessing from below.

On the significance of the word את (*et*), see above, p. 287, n. 114. On the image of the divine flame and the human wick, see *Zohar* 1:50b–51a; above, pp. 253–54, n. 24; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 180.

367. **That wicked one said…** Balak knew that *Shekhinah* depends on Israel's blessings, so he advised Balaam to bless Her himself and thereby detach *Shekhinah* from Her people, since She would no longer need them. The phrase אשר תברך את (*et asher tevarekh*), *whomever you bless*, now implies that Balaam should bless *Et*, namely *Shekhinah*. As soon as the divine flame of *Shekhinah* is separated from Israel, Balaam would be able to "curse the [Israelite] wick."

The full verse in Numbers (recording Balaam's words) reads: *He said to Balak, "Station yourself here by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I myself may be happened upon* [or: *and I myself will be encountered*; *and I myself will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*]. Here, Rabbi El'azar transforms אקרה כה ואנכי (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I myself may be happened upon yonder*, into אעקר לההוא כה (*e'qar le-hahu koh*), "I will uproot that *Koh*," that is, "I will detach *Shekhinah*" from Israel. See above, notes 148, 349.

368. ***with implements of divination…*** Why did Balak need to send *implements of divination* to the master sorcerer Balaam? So that the wicked Balaam would have no excuse to delay.

See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:8; Rashi. The full verse reads: *The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went, with implements of divination* [or: *spells*] *in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke Balak's words to him*.

369. **אתה (*Attah*), *As for you…*** Here, *attah* (*you*) becomes a name of *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, who is the most accessible of all the *sefirot* and can be addressed directly. She is also pictured as Ark of the Covenant, containing (or housing) *Yesod*, the Divine Phallus, who is symbolized by the covenant of circumcision. *Shekhinah* accompanies Her people in exile.

On *Shekhinah* as *attah* see *Zohar* 1:15b, 37a, 154b, 156b, 158b, 169a, 198a, 205b; 2:23b, 70a (*RR*), 104a, 138b,

140a, 179b, 221a, 261a (*Heikh*). On *Shekhinah* as Ark (or Ark of the Covenant), see *Zohar* 1:2a, 33b, 50b, 59b, 228b, 251a; 2:13a, 214a, 235b, 259a–b (*Heikh*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 75 (95). On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, note 318. On the Ark going into exile (i.e., being captured by the Philistines), see 1 Samuel 4–6.

The passage in Jeremiah reads: *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob; do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob will return and be calm and secure, with no one frightening him. As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—for I am with you. For I will make an end* [or: *a complete destruction*] *of all the nations where I have scattered you, but of you I will not make an end! I will chasten you* [or: *I will discipline you*] *in just measure* [or: *in justice*], *and will not leave you wholly unpunished* [or: *and will surely not leave you unpunished; and will not clear you completely*]. Cf. Jeremiah 30:10–11.

370. **When Moses demanded mercy for Israel…** After they complained about not having enough to eat in the desert and God's wrath flared.

The context in Numbers (11:14–15) reads: *I cannot by myself carry this entire people, for it is too heavy for me. If this is how* את (*at*), *You, treat me, kill me, please, instantly, if I have found favor in Your eyes—so that I won't have to see my wretchedness*. The spelling את (*at*) normally indicates the feminine form of the pronoun "you," as opposed to the masculine form אתה (*attah*). However, according to linguists, the spelling את (*at*) actually represents the original form of the masculine pronoun. This form appears also in Deuteronomy 5:24 and Ezekiel 28:14.

Here the *Zohar* interprets Moses' statement as referring to *Shekhinah*, who "is called אתה (*Attah*), You," because She "is not separated from You" (namely from the blessed Holy One). The final letter of Her name אתה (*Attah*)—the letter ה (*he*)—"is joined to Israel." If God destroys Israel,

then this letter will be removed from the name אתה (*Attah*), leaving only את (*at*). The verse is now construed as: אם ככה את עשה לי (*Ve-im kakhah at osah li*), *If so*, [You] *make* [אתה (*attah*)] *into* את (*at*) *for me*.

On the wording *If this is how* את (*at*), *You, treat me*, see Rashi on Numbers 11:15; Naḥmanides on Numbers 11:15; *Zohar* 3:155b–156a (Vol. 8, p. 539, nn. 157–58; p. 544, n. 175). Cf. BT *Berakhot* 32a; Rashi on Deuteronomy 5:24; below, pp. 671–72, n. 40. See also *Zohar* 1:15b (Vol. 1, p. 113, n. 42); above, note 366.

371. ***What will You do for Your great name?...*** In Kabbalah *Your great name* normally refers to *YHVH*, but here it apparently refers to *Attah* (You), and the verse in Jeremiah demonstrates that these two divine names are equivalent.

The full verse in Joshua reads: *When the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land hear* [that Israel has fled from her enemies], *they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?* The statement *You are YHVH* also appears in Nehemiah 9:6–7.

372. **even though the blessed Holy One did not tell him so...** That as a result of Israel's destruction, the letter ה (*he*) would be removed from the name אתה (*Attah*), leaving only את (*at*). Moses knew on his own "that one depends on the other," i.e., that the presence of the letter ה (*he*) in the name אתה (*Attah*) depends on the existence of Israel, and that Israel's sin separates this letter from the name.

373. **all is one** This apparently means that since the full name אתה (*Attah*) signifies God's bond with Israel and ensures their deliverance, this opening word of the verse "is one" with the continuation: *do not fear* or *be dismayed*.

374. ***For I am with you...*** This may imply that *Shekhinah* —who is known as אני (*ani*), *I*—is always *with you*, even in exile.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:249a; 2:174a. For various interpretations, see Or *Yaqar*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

375. ***For I will make an end…*** Or, *a complete destruction*. However, concerning Israel, the verse goes on to say: *but of you I will not make an end!* For the full verse, see above, note 369.

376. **Rav Hamnuna the First said…** This venerable figure taught that Israel's suffering is actually beneficial to them, since it purges their guilt and renders them worthy of *Shekhinah*, the Bride, who will adorn Herself with them. Conversely, the ease and tranquility enjoyed by the other nations eventually lead to their destruction.

Rav Hamnuna is playing with דחיקו (*deḥiqu*), "distress," and the technical grammatical term דחיק (*deḥiq*), "compressed," which refers to certain cases when a *dagesh* (point) appears in the first letter of a word that is closely connected with the preceding word (the two words being seen as "compressed"). For example, in the clause תכסה-בָּהּ אשר (*asher tekhasseh-bah*), *with which you cover yourself* (Deuteronomy 22:12), the letter ב (*bet*) in the word בה (*bah*) has such a *dagesh* because it is closely connected with the preceding word, תכסה (*tekhasseh*). Here in the *Zohar*, the word *deḥiq* can mean "pointed," that is, marked with a *dagesh* (point), based on the grammatical principle of *deḥiq* (compressed).

Because Israel has endured *deḥiqu* (distress), they become worthy of the כַּלָּה (*Kallah*), "(Divine) Bride," who is described as "all דחיק (*deḥiq*), pointed," because both consonants of the word כַּלָּה (*kallah*)—the letters כ (*kaf*) and ל (*lamed*)—are marked with a *dagesh* (point). Conversely, since the other nations have experienced only רפיון (*rifyon*), "ease," and tranquility (despite their wickedness), they will suffer כָּלָה (*khalah*), *complete destruction*. This word is described as "all in *rifyon*, weakness," because both consonants of the word כָּלָה (*khalah*)—the letters כ (*khaf*) and ל (*lamed*)—have no *dagesh* (point) and are therefore each described grammatically as רפה (*rafeh*), "weak."

Rav Hamnuna is also playing on the Talmudic saying (BT *Berakhot* 6b, in the name of Abbaye): אגרא דכלה דוחקא (*agra de-khallah duḥqa*), "The reward of [attending] the *kallah* [i.e., a massive educational assembly convened for several days during the year] is [for] the pressure [of overcrowding]." He is apparently reimagining this as: כלה אגרא דדוחקא (*agra de-duḥqa kallah*), "The reward of distress is the Bride."

On the term *deḥiq*, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §20c. Cf. *ZḤ* 105c (*Tiq*). On the saying in *Berakhot*, see *Zohar* 3:239a (*RM*); *TZ* 12, 27a; *ZḤ* 118c (*Tiq*); Scholem.

On the figure of Rav Hamnuna, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On Rav Hamnuna the First, see *Zohar* 2:145a, 146b; Cohen, "How Many R. Hamnunas in the Babylonian Talmud?"

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *For* אעשה כלה (*e'eseh khalah*), *I will make an end* [or: *a complete destruction*], *of all the nations where I have scattered you*. For the full verse, see above, note 369. The verse in Isaiah 28 reads: *For* כלה ונחרצה (*khalah ve-neḥeratsah*), *a decreed destruction, I have heard from my Lord YHVH Tseva'ot against all the land*.

377. ***I will raise the fallen booth of David…*** Alluding to *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—who is associated with the ideal king, David.

The other nations, who acted wickedly, will suffer כָּלָה (*khalah*), *complete destruction*. Their undeserved *rifyon*, "ease," and tranquility will be fittingly replaced by a different type of *rifyon*—namely the "weakness" of the letters כ (*khaf*) and ל (*lamed*) in the word כָּלָה (*khalah*), which have no *dagesh* (point) and are therefore each described grammatically as רפה (*rafeh*), "weak." See the preceding note.

378. ***I will chasten you*** **למשפט (*la-mishpat*), *for justice…*** The verse reads: *I will chasten you* [or: *I will discipline you*] *in just measure* [or: *in justice*], *and will not leave you wholly unpunished* [or: *and will surely not leave*

you unpunished; and will not clear you completely]. See above, note 369.

379. **the blessed Holy One will provide a remedy for Israel in advance…** By chastening Israel gradually during their time on earth, He ensures that they will be able to endure the final judgment at the end of days and be vindicated. This explains why the verse in Jeremiah reads *I will chasten you* למשפט (*la-mishpat*), *for justice*—that is, in preparation *for judgment*.

On God punishing Israel gradually out of His love for them, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 4a; and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *ke-fid*; *nifra mimmennu me'at me'at*.

380. ***And I will surely not leave you unpunished…*** On the Day of Judgment, Samael appears with many lists of Israel's sins; but God produces counter-lists of all the suffering and chastening that Israel has endured, so "all the sins are expunged." Their extensive suffering proves that God does not show them "any leniency at all," which matches the verse in Jeremiah: *And I will surely not leave you unpunished*. For the wording of the verse, see above, note 378.

381. **King David said…** In the book of Psalms, traditionally ascribed to David. According to a rabbinic tradition, this verse refers to Shebna and Joah, two officials under King Hezekiah, who supposedly offered to surrender to King Sennacherib of Assyria. The *Zohar*, however, applies the verse to Samael and his cohorts.

On Shebna and Joah's meeting with King Sennacherib, see 2 Kings 18:17–37; Isaiah 36. On the rabbinic interpretation of the verse in Psalms, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 5:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 26a; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:2.

382. **Balak and Balaam took that very same path…** The wicked path followed by Samael. They claimed that they surpassed Amalek, who had attacked Israel soon after they crossed the Red Sea.

The name בלעם (*Bil'am*), "Balaam," now implies "בל עם (*bal am*), "not a nation," meaning that he (along with Balak) will annihilate the nation of Israel. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 105a: "בלעם (*Bil'am*), Balaam—בלא עם (*be-lo am*), without a people," perhaps meaning that Balaam left his homeland (Aram-naharaim).

On Amalek's attack, see above, pp. 37–38, n. 103. The wording of the simile "like a snake striking בזנבא דיליה (*be-zanba dileih*), with its tail," may be playing on the description of Amalek in Deuteronomy 25:18: *how he encountered you on the way* ויזנב (*va-yzannev*), *and cut down from behind* [or: *cut off the tail of*; *smote the rear of*], *all your stragglers*.

383. **But the blessed Holy One…** God combined the first two letters of each of their names to form the word בלבל (*bilbel*), "confused." The remaining letters of their names spell the word עמק (*omeq*), "depth." Cf. *Zohar* 1:25a (*TZ*).

384. **may Balak's spirit expire in Hell…** The curse תיפח רוחיה (*tippaḥ ruḥeih*), "May his spirit expire!" (which appears often in rabbinic literature) is equivalent to "May he breathe his last!" "May he drop dead!" See above, p. 14, n. 38.

Balak and Balaam conspired against *Shekhinah*, Israel's Protector, who is known as כה (*Koh*), "Thus." See above, note 148.

385. **That evil one…** Balak. The ancient ones tried to build the Tower of Babel and thereby displace *Shekhinah*, but God confused their language and scattered them over all the earth (hence their name "the generation of the Dispersion"). But now Balak felt confident in Balaam's power of speech, which could doom Israel, uproot *Shekhinah*, and blessedly elevate the demonic Other Side. Balak had already "arranged" the necessary "action" of sorcery, setting the stage for Balaam's potent speech. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 346.

386. ***so that they will not understand…*** The full verse reads: *Come, let us go down and baffle their language*

there, so that they will not understand each other's language.

The context in Numbers (23:1–2) reads: *Balaam said to Balak, "Build me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." Balak did as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar*.

387. **See that wicked one…** Balaam. On his haughtiness, see M *Avot* 5:19; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:10.

Numbers 23:4 reads in full: *God encountered Balaam, and he said to Him, "The seven altars I have arrayed, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar*."

388. וכה תדבר **(*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and Koh shall speak…*** The full verse reads: *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth, and He said, "Return to Balak* וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak*." Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *ve-khoh tedabber* as *and Koh* [namely *Shekhinah*, who is called *Koh*, Thus] *shall speak*. On *Shekhinah* as *Koh*, see above, note 148.

389. **He took the sense of those elders away…** So the *implements of divination in their hand* proved useless.

The full verse reads: *The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went, with implements of divination* [or: *spells*] *in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke Balak's words to him*. Cf. above, note 368.

390. וידברו **(*Va-ydabberu*), *And they spoke…*** The verb דבר (*dbr*), "to speak," is more intense than אמר (*'mr*), "to say." Balak's emissaries had to speak loudly to Balaam because he was hard of hearing. His various physical defects made him well suited for contact with the demonic Other Side.

On the semantic distinction between *dbr* and *'mr*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 99; BT *Makkot* 10b–11a; *Leqaḥ Tov* and *Sekhel Tov* on Exodus 6:2; *Zohar* 1:86b; 2:22b, 25b, 83a–b; 3:88b, 132b–133a (*IR*). Cf. *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 2; *Sifra, Sheratsim* 2:7, 47c; *Zohar* 1:16b, 157a, 234b; 2:17a (*MhN*); 3:50b, 88b, 161a, 211a; Vol. 8, p. 58, n. 10.

On Balaam's defective vision, see BT *Sanhedrin* 105a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *shetum ha-ayin*; *Niddah* 31a; *Zohar* 1:68b; 2:69a, 237a; 3:63b, 147b, 202b, 207b. On his being lame in one leg, see BT *Sotah* 10a, *Sanhedrin* 105a. His being hard of hearing is not mentioned in rabbinic sources.

391. **ויאמר (*Va-yomer*), *And he said, to them…*** Whereas Balak's emissaries had to speak loudly to Balaam, on account of his impaired hearing—as demonstrated by the verb *va-ydabberu, and they spoke, to him*—Balaam responded normally to them, as demonstrated by the verb ויאמר (*va-yomer*), *and he said, to them*.

On the distinction between the two verbs, see the preceding note. Numbers 22:8 reads in full: *And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will reply to you as YHVH will speak to me." And the chieftains of Moab stayed with Balaam*.

392. ***As YHVH will speak to me…*** Balaam boasted that *YHVH* would speak to him, but this was false, as explained below. Cf. above at notes 233–36.

393. ***And the chieftains of Moab stayed…*** This seems to imply that *the elders of Midian* (mentioned in the preceding verse) left Balaam. Rabbi Shim'on remarks that the Midianites should have separated "entirely [from the wicked scheme against Israel], rather than eventually striking" against the Holy People "in two matters": by seducing them with their women and enticing them to worship the heathen god Baal-peor. According to one tradition, Balaam advised the Midianites (and/or the Moabites) to seduce the Israelites to this double sin.

See Numbers 31:16; above, note 237; pp. 279–80, nn. 95–96. The context in Numbers (25:16–18) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, "Attack the Midianites and strike them! For they attacked you by their wiles that they perpetrated against you in the incident of Peor and in the incident of Cozbi daughter of the Midianite chieftain, their*

kinswoman, who was struck down on the day of the plague over the incident of Peor.”

On “striking with the tail,” cf. above at note 382. For the full text of Numbers 22:8, see above, note 391.

394. **How fine it would have been for the Midianites…** If they had actually intended to reject Balak’s plan to curse Israel. But really, *the chieftains of Moab stayed with Balaam* because when he told them *I will reply to you as YHVH will speak to me*, they genuinely wanted to hear God’s word; whereas the elders of Midian showed no such respect.

395. **this wicked one murmured incantations…** Balaam performed sorcery in order to draw down upon himself “a spirit from above.” Here, the term *Elohim* refers not to God, but rather to a demonic power stemming from Judgment on the left side, who *came to Balaam*.

According to rabbinic interpretation, the name *Elohim* signifies Judgment. (See above, p. 240, n. 21.) In the *Zohar*, this name can refer to harsh and even demonic powers. See *Zohar* 1:111b; 2:96a; 3:8a, 113a, 207a, 208b, 211b; *ZḤ* 78d (*MhN, Rut*); *Minḥat Shai* on Genesis 20:3.

On the equivocal nature of the name *Elohim*, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:2: “Every Hebrew knew that the term *Elohim* is equivocal, designating the deity, the angels, and the rulers governing the cities.” See also *Zohar* 3:113a (Vol. 8, p. 228, n. 15), 208b; *ZḤ* 4a (*MhN*); Vol. 8, p. 169, n. 326. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Elohim came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?”*

The word “spells” renders בלטין (*belatin*), based on בלטיהם (*be-lateihem*), *with their spells* (Exodus 7:22; 8:3, 14), where the plural possessive form of the noun לט (*lat*), “occult skill, magic,” is preceded by the preposition ב (*be*), *with*. Here, playfully, the author turns the prepositional letter ב (*bet*) into part of a neologistic noun בלטין (*belatin*), “spells.” See *Zohar* 2:192a (Vol. 6, pp. 86–87, n. 87).

396. ***Who are these men with you?...*** If the name *Elohim* referred to God, then why would He need to ask Balaam this question? Rather, *Elohim* refers to the demonic rung "that needed to ask."

According to a midrashic tradition, God poses such questions in order to test people. When He showed Ezekiel the valley of dry bones and asked, "*Can these bones live?*" the prophet passed the test by responding, "*YHVH Elohim, you alone know*." However, when Isaiah asked King Hezekiah (concerning the ambassadors from the king of Babylon), "*From where have they come to you?*" Hezekiah replied, "*From a distant land they came to me, from Babylon*"—whereas he should have said: "You are a prophet of God, and you're asking me?" Balaam, too, failed the test. When God asked him, "*Who are these men with you?*" he replied, "*Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me*"—whereas he should have responded like Ezekiel.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:11; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 45; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:6. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:9; Rashi on Numbers 22:9. The verse in Ezekiel reads: *He said to me, "O human, can these bones live?" I replied, "O Lord God, You alone know."* The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say and from where have they come to you?" Hezekiah replied, "From a distant land they came to me, from Babylon."* Cf. 2 Kings 20:14. Numbers 22:10 reads in full: *Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me* [the following message]."

397. **A certain Cuthean...** The term technically means "a Samaritan," but in rabbinic literature it often connotes (or represents a censored version of) "a Gentile." Here, the Gentile tries to demonstrate that Balaam was greater than Moses, since Moses was merely *called* by God, whereas God Himself *came to Balaam*. On the relation between Moses and Balaam, cf. above, note 4.

398. **So, Balaam…** In order to ensure that Balaam would not contaminate Israel, God Himself *came to Balaam*.

399. ***you shall not go with them…*** Namely, with the elders of Moab sent by Balak.

400. ***From the Tent of Meeting…*** Alluding to God's heavenly palace, or to *Shekhinah*. The full verse: *He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying*.

401. **And he said, "*King of Moab…*** Whereas here Balaam describes Balak as מלך מואב (*melekh mo'av*), *king of Moab*, earlier in the chapter Scripture presents a slightly different wording: *Balak son of Zippor was* מלך למואב (*melekh le-mo'av*), *king over Moab* [literally: *to Moab*], *at that time*. According to a midrashic tradition, the phrase *at that time* implies that Balak was not really worthy of being king, but was crowned only in a state of emergency when the former king died. Here, the *Zohar* concludes that the description *melekh le-mo'av, king to Moab*, is less regal than *melekh mo'av, king of Moab*. Whereas Balak was really not meant to be king, Balaam called him *king of Moab*, as if to say: "Look how important I am! A great king has sent for me!"

On the significance of the phrase *at that time*, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:4; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 22:4; Rashi on Numbers 22:4; above at note 302.

Numbers 22:10 reads in full: *Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me* [the following message]." On Balaam's arrogant tone here, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:9; Rashi, ad loc. The full verse in Numbers 21 reads: *For Heshbon is the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and he had fought against the former* [or: *first*] *king of Moab and seized all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon*.

402. **Rabbi Pinḥas…** Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, a second-century rabbi who lived in Palestine, was renowned for his saintliness and ability to work miracles. In the *Zohar*

he is a revered member of Rabbi Shim'on's circle. Such special recognition is to be expected since (according to BT *Shabbat* 33b) Rabbi Pinḥas was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shim'on. However, the *Zohar* elevates Pinḥas further by transforming him into Rabbi Shim'on's father-in-law—as here, where his daughter is described as "the mother of Rabbi El'azar," i.e., the wife of Rabbi Shim'on. This new role could be the result of a simple mistake: confusing חתן (*ḥatan*), "son-in-law," and חותן (*ḥoten*), "father-in-law." However, the switch may also be deliberate, an instance of interchanging father and son. Cf. above, pp. 263–64, n. 55.

In rabbinic literature Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey is depicted as pious, refusing to eat food that had not been definitely tithed. See JT *Demai* 1:3, 21d–22a; *Sheqalim* 5:1, 48d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 60:8; BT *Ḥullin* 7a–b, *Shabbat* 112b. Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 8. Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey appears elsewhere in the *Zohar* (3:36a–b, 221b) and performs admirably.

On Rabbi Pinḥas, see also *Devarim Rabbah* 3:3; *Zohar* 1:11a–b (Vol. 1, p. 75, n. 566); 3:36a–37a (Vol. 7, p. 211, n. 12), 59b–60b, 62a–b, 144b (*IR*), 220a–b, 221b–222a, 224a–226b, 232b–233b, 240b, 225b, 261a, 287b–288a (*IZ*), 296b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 12b (*MhN*), 19a (*MhN*); Emden, *Mitpaḥat Sefarim*, 29. On this story, see Oron, *Tsohar le-Sippurei ha-Zohar*, 42–62.

On the illness of Rabbi El'azar's mother (i.e., Rabbi Shim'on's wife), see *Zohar* 3:64a. The phrase "since days of old" renders מיומין דעלמא (*mi-yomin de-alma*), literally "since days of eternity (or of the world)." See above, p. 253, n. 21; below at note 407.

403. **this donkey's voice…** On the remarkable nature of Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey, see the preceding note.

404. ***To the one who performs great wonders alone…*** According to a midrashic reading (attributed to Rabbi El'azar son of Pedat), the adverb *alone* implies that (often) only God Himself is aware of the miracles He

performs. See BT *Niddah* 31a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 17; *Midrash Tehillim* 106:1; 136:2–3.

405. **Someone else comes along, who is given as ransom…** Once an evil act has been ordained, it must be executed—if not on the intended victim, then on a substitute. See above, note 85.

406. **something I didn't know** Namely, the wondrous act of his donkey.

407. **that old man raised his voice…** See David ben Abraham Maimuni (the grandson of Maimonides), *Midrash David*, 84.

408. **They departed** The subject is apparently the Arabs.

409. **the Master of the steps of beasts…** The angel appointed over beasts.

410. **With no goading, his donkey swerved from the road…** And headed to the location of Rabbi Shim'on.

The wording "the donkey swerved from the road" matches the description of Balaam's donkey: *The jenny saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed in the road, his sword unsheathed in his hand, and the jenny swerved from the road and went into the field; and Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road* (Numbers 22:23). See *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.

The phrase "the Countenance of Days" alludes to the divine title "the Ancient of Days," which appears in Daniel 7:9: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire*. In the *Zohar*, "the Ancient of Days" designates the primordial *sefirah, Keter*. Here, remarkably, "the Countenance of Days" refers to the face of Rabbi Shim'on. He and his son, Rabbi El'azar, are pictured as "the Great Face and the Small Face."

On the divine nature of Rabbi Shim'on, see below, note 425. For the phrase "the Countenance of Days," see *Zohar*

1:83a, 89b (*ST*), 130a, 188a; 3:132b (*IR*); *ZḤ* 19a (*MhN*), 25c (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:139. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15 (both referring to Rabbi Shim'on).

The image of "the Great (or Large) Face and the Small Face" derives from a Talmudic discussion of the cherubim. In Kabbalah, these two "faces" sometimes allude to two divine configurations: *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze'eir Anpin*, which can be understood respectively as "the Large (or Vast) Countenance" and "the Small Countenance."

See BT *Sukkah* 5b: "Rabbi Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'We have learned that the face of the cherubim was no less than a hand-breadth….' What is a כרוב (*keruv*), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'כרביא (*Ke-ravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רביא (*ravya*).' Abbaye said to him, 'If so, how do you explain the verse: *The face of one was the face of a cherub, and the face of the second the face of a human* (Ezekiel 10:14), seeing that [the faces of] a cherub and a human are the same?'—'A large face and a small face [i.e., *the face of a human* is large, while *the face of a cherub* is small].'"

See BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Zohar* 1:18b; 2:278a; 3:60b, 217b, 274a; *TZ* 70, 129b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 105–19; 170, n. 65; Vol. 8, pp. 323–24, n. 14.

The term "goading" renders טעין (*ta'ein*), based on Arabic *ta'ana*, "to pierce, goad." See above, p. 250, n. 13. The phrase "two miles" renders תרין מלין (*terein milin*), referring to the Roman mile, slightly shorter than the modern mile. This wording plays on the homonymous phrase spoken by Rabbi Pinḥas (a few paragraphs above): תרין מלין (*Terein millin*), "Two things, you said in which I delight."

411. **מזמור (*Mizmor*), *A psalm…*** Above this word appears an erect accent (or cantillation) sign, known as pazer. According to Rabbi Shim'on, the shape of this sign alludes to the royal stature of *Shekhinah*. She is known as *mizmor* (*a psalm*) because She sings constantly to Her beloved, *Tif'eret*.

Since the author of Psalm 98 is anonymous, it is called "an orphaned song." See the following note. On the significance of the erect accent, see above, pp. 293–94, n. 141. On *Shekhinah* as *mizmor* (*a psalm*), see *Zohar* 1:39b (*Heikh*), 67a, 123b; 2:50a, 140a, 170a.

412. **Who uttered this song?...** See BT *Avodah Zarah* 24b, which explores the account of the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines in battle, but God miraculously punished the enemy by breaking the idol of its god Dagon and striking the population with a plague. Consequently, the suffering Philistines send the Ark back on a wagon drawn by two milch cows, who miraculously head straight to Israelite territory as if they knew the way, as described in 1 Samuel 6:12: *The cows went straight on the way, on the way to Beth Shemesh; on a single road they went, lowing as they went, and veering neither right nor left*. The Talmudic discussion focuses on the opening of this verse: וישרנה הפרות (*Va-yisharnah ha-parot*), *The cows went straight*. "What is the meaning of *va-yisharnah*? Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Me'ir, 'They sang a song.'... Which song did they sing? Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir, *'Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel* [את השירה הזאת (*et ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song to YHVH*] (Exodus 15:1).' ... Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish said, 'The orphaned psalm: *A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new* שיר (*shir*), *song, for He has worked wonders. His right hand has won Him victory, and His holy arm*.'"

According to *Zohar* 2:137b–138a, the heavenly *ḥayyot* (living beings) chant this psalm while carrying the Divine Chariot-Throne. Here, the cows chant the psalm "to many chariots, to many [angelic] chieftains." The lowing of the cows parallels the braying of Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey. See Oron, *Tsohar le-Sippurei ha-Zohar*, 45.

The phrase "the Ark, unidentified" means that here "the Ark" symbolizes *Shekhinah*. In the concluding sentence, Rabbi Shim'on wonders why the verse in Samuel employs the

masculine form שיר (*shir*), *song*, whereas the verse in Exodus (introducing the Song at the Sea) employs the feminine form שירה (*shirah*), *song*.

On the passage in BT *Avodah Zarah*, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:4; *Tosafot, Avodah Zarah* 24b, s.v. *mizmora yatma*; *Zohar* 1:123a–124a; above, p. 124, n. 215; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 122.

413. **there, with Moses, a solitary Ark…** When Israel came forth from the exile of Egypt, *Shekhinah*—symbolized by the Ark and also known as זאת (*zot*), "This"—was still without Her spouse, *Tif'eret*, so the feminine form *shirah* pertains. Soon afterward, Israel received the Torah at Sinai, and the tablets of the covenant (symbolizing *Tif'eret*, who is also known as Written Torah) were "concealed within" the Ark. The description in Samuel reflects this later stage, so the masculine form *shir* pertains, emphasizing what is within the Ark.

The phrase "along with Her multitudes" refers to cohorts of angels surrounding *Shekhinah* and apparently also to the mass of Israelites. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7. On the contrast between the forms *shir* and *shirah*, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:5; *Shemot Rabbah* 23:1; *Zohar* 2:54b; 3:284b–285a; *ZḤ* 63a (*ShS*).

414. **what He did to the Philistines…** See above, note 412.

415. **That *mizmor*, *psalm*, itself…** *Shekhinah*, who is known as *mizmor* (*psalm*). She is the Ark, in which is concealed *Tif'eret* (described as "a supernal holy spirit").

416. ***His right hand*—that which the Elder inherits…** God's *right hand* is the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed*, which was attained by Abraham, who is known as "the Elder." *Ḥesed* grasps *Shekhinah* (known as *mizmor*), protecting Her from the demonic Other Side. On Abraham as "the Elder," see above, p. 294, n. 142.

The title סבא (*Sava*), "the Elder," may also refer to Rabbi Pinḥas, who is about to be described as סבא חסידא (*sava ḥasida*), "the pious old man," and is intimately associated with the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* and the quality of חסידות (*ḥasidut*), "love, devotion." See below at notes 419, 429; *Zohar* 1:11b; 3:62a (Vol. 7, pp. 408–9, n. 156), 225b, 240b; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:140.

417. **Whenever that *right hand* would generate a miracle…** Whenever *Ḥesed* generates a miracle for Israel, it grasps *Shekhinah* (known as *mizmor*), who represents Israel and is, in fact, known as Assembly of Israel. On the divine title Assembly of Israel, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

418. **At first, as it were…** Rabbi Shim'on contrasts the verses in Exodus and Lamentations. The first verse proclaims that God's *right hand is glorious* בכח (*ba-koaḥ*), *in the power*, and the wording *the power* (with the definite article) implies "the well-known one," namely the potent chest of *Shekhinah*, who is Assembly of Israel. (Rabbi Shim'on claims that in Arabic, a person's chest is called "power.") Thereby the blessed Holy One protects *Shekhinah* from the demonic Other Side, and Her people from their enemies.

However, when Israel sins, the verse in Lamentations pertains: *He has withdrawn His right hand*, implying that God removes His hand from the chest of *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel) and pushes Her (and Her people) into exile. Thus, even the divine right hand (representing *Ḥesed*) now functions like the left hand, which represents *Din* (Judgment).

The verse in Psalms mentions both *His right hand* and *His holy arm*, implying that at the time of salvation both of God's arms will join in redeeming *Shekhinah* and Her people.

The verse in Exodus reads in full: *Your right hand, O YHVH, is glorious* בכח (*ba-koaḥ*), *in power* [literally: *in the power*]. *Your right hand, O YHVH, smashes the enemy*. The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has withdrawn His right hand in the face of the enemy* [thereby enabling them to

defeat Israel]. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:6; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; 2:6; *Tanḥuma, Beshallaḥ* 15; *Zohar* 1:163b; 2:57a–b, 143b, 203a, 254a (*Heikh*); 3:74a, 237a. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, note 318.

Rabbi Shim'on's claim—"In Arabia they call a person's chest כח (*koaḥ*), power"—employs a frequent rabbinic formula ("In Arabia they call X Y"), but there is apparently no basis for this particular supposed Arabic usage. Rather, the statement likely alludes to a different word: תוקפא (*tuqpa*), which normally means "power, strength," but in the *Zohar* occasionally signifies "bosom, breast, chest." This new sense derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Numbers 11:12, which renders the biblical expression שאהו בחיקך (*sa'ehu ve-ḥeiqekha*), *carry it* [the people Israel] *in your bosom*, as בתוקפך סוברהי (*sovarhi ve-tuqpakh*), "carry it in your strength." This Targumic rendering is a paraphrase, unless the translator read or imagined the Hebrew בחזקך (*ve-ḥozqekha*), *in your strength*, instead of בחיקך (*ve-ḥeiqekha*), *in your bosom*—a tiny orthographical difference.

Based on this Targumic usage of *tuqpa*, the *Zohar* sometimes employs the word to signify "bosom, breast, chest." Scholem contends that this is due to a misunderstanding: "The author mistook the Midrashic *interpretation* for a *literal translation*!" However, it seems more likely that the newfangled meaning is due not to ignorance but to linguistic playfulness, so typical of the *Zohar*.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 11:12; *Zohar* 2:9a, 96a–b, 113a–b; 3:127b (*IR*), 206a, 234a; *ZḤ* 55a–b, 92c–d (*MhN*, *Eikhah*); Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David* , s.v. *tuqpa*; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 389, n. 48; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 267. Cf. above, p. 48, n. 136.

For the formula "In Arabia they call X Y," see JT *Berakhot* 9:1, 13c; *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 28c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 36:1; 87:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:3; 5:1; 25:5; 30:3; *Eikhah*

Rabbah 1:44; 2:17; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:11; 27:3; *Rut Rabbah* 5:6; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 4, *Ḥayyei Sarah* 2, *Tazri'a* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:1; 42:4.

419. **If those cows…** If those normal cows carrying the Ark (back from the Philistines) uttered a psalm, how much more so should Rabbi Pinḥas's wondrous donkey be able to sing. On the cows chanting, see above, note 412.

420. **go take a look at the donkey of Balaam the wicked…** Who spoke brilliantly to Balaam, vanquishing him in words. Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey is even more gifted. Furthermore, Balaam's donkey did not speak on her own, but rather through the power of an angel.

On the verbal triumph of Balaam's donkey, see Numbers 22:28–30; *Bereshit Rabbah* 93:6 (p. 1160). Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 105b (and parallels). On the angel, cf. Numbers 22:31–35.

421. **The mouth of the donkey that was created on the eve of Sabbath…** According to M *Avot* 5:6, at the end of the six days of Creation ten supernatural phenomena "were created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight: the mouth of the earth [that engulfed Korah and his rebellious faction], the mouth of the well [that miraculously accompanied the Israelites through the desert, providing them with water], the mouth of the donkey [that spoke to Balaam],… Some say, 'Also, the demons.'"

This Mishnaic statement implies that God fashioned the actual mouth of Balaam's donkey at the end of the first week of Creation, or that He decreed right then and there that when the time came, the donkey's mouth would speak. But Rabbi Shim'on offers a deeper meaning: "The mouth of the donkey" is the name of the highest female demonic rung, which was created on the eve of the first Sabbath. For millennia, this "mouth" was hidden in the demonic Hollow of the Great Abyss, until finally the moment arrived for it to settle upon Balaam's donkey, empowering her to speak.

On the Mishnaic reference to “the mouth of the earth,” see Numbers 16:32 (quoted in the following note). On “the mouth of the well (of Miriam),” see ibid. 21:16–18; above, p. 204, n. 55. On “the mouth of the donkey,” see Numbers 22:28–30; below at note 572.

422. ***The earth opened את פיה (et piha), its mouth…*** The context in Numbers (16:32–33, describing the fate of Korah and his faction) reads: *The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households and every human being that was Korah’s and all the possessions. And they went down, they and all that was theirs, alive to Sheol, and the earth covered them, and they vanished from the midst of the assembly.*

Grammatically, the word את (*et*) is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. Although this little word seems superfluous, already in rabbinic times Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that its presence in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, et alludes to Dumah, the prince of Hell. (On Dumah, see above, p. 243, n. 32).

In the phrase את פי האתון (*et pi ha-aton*), *the mouth of the donkey* [or: *the jenny*], the word et amplifies the meaning to include the demonic angel Kamriel. This angel shares the title *the mouth of the donkey* with the highest female demonic rung mentioned in the preceding paragraph (or perhaps Kamriel is identical with that rung).

423. **Who is ‘the mouth of the well’?…** The holy angel Yehadriel, appointed over the miraculous well, is situated below *Shekhinah*, who is known as “the mouth of *YHVH*.”

On *Shekhinah* as the divine mouth, see above, p. 268, n. 69. On Yehadriel, see *Massekhet Heikhalot*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:47; Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§195, 397; *Zohar* 2:249b (*Heikh*).

424. **These three mouths were created on the eve of Sabbath…** Based on the passage from M *Avot*, quoted

above, note 421. As the sun set and the holiness of Sabbath commenced, *Shekhinah* (known as "mouth of *YHVH*") ascended to unite with Her spouse, *Tif'eret*.

425. **I have kissed the mouth of *YHVH*...** Rabbi Pinḥas identifies Rabbi Shim'on with *Shekhinah*, who is called "the mouth of *YHVH*."

According to rabbinic tradition, "whoever welcomes [literally: receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*." See *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: "Rabbi Shemu'el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, '... Whoever welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'... Rabbi Yishma'el taught...: 'One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* sometimes transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are called the face of *Shekhinah* "because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment and they are revealed" (2:163b).

See Vol. 8, p. 483, n. 74; *Zohar* 3:240a, 265b; and 3:59b, where Rabbi Pinḥas kisses Rabbi Shim'on and declares, "I am privileged to kiss *Shekhinah*! Happy is my share!" On the divine nature of Rabbi Shim'on, see also *Zohar* 1:218b, 223a; 2:38a; 3:61b, 79b, 221b, 298a; above, note 410; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 239–40, n. 68.

426. **all those birds providing shade...** See above at note 407. The description "your Master standing here" may refer to *Shekhinah*, or perhaps to Rabbi Shim'on himself or to Rabbi Pinḥas. On Rabbi Pinḥas's power over birds, see *Zohar* 1:11a.

427. **him who is appointed over you...** The angel appointed over birds. At first it was in his power to serve Rabbi Shim'on with his birds, but now they must leave.

"The Day of the Rock" refers to a day of harsh Judgment. The "mighty teeth" may be the sharp points of the rock. Cf. the image of the rock in *Zohar* 2:106a (Vol. 5,

p. 83, n. 234), 184a. The concluding clause—“and they do not converge”—may refer to the clouds not converging to provide shade, without which the birds would need to return.

For various interpretations of the concluding sentence, see Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The wording “and they do not converge” renders ולא מתחברין (*ve-la mitḥabberin*). Various witnesses (V20, *Or Yaqar*, Cremona, and Mantua) read instead: ולא מתתברין (*ve-la mittabberin*), “and they are not smashed,” which could refer to God (not) breaking the teeth of the harsh forces of Judgment. Cf. Psalms 3:8: *The teeth of the wicked You smash*.

428. **three trees spreading branches…** Miraculously providing shade for them, replacing that of the birds.

429. **so much trouble for those birds…** To provide shade.

On Rabbi Pinḥas’s concern for the suffering of animals, see BT *Ḥullin* 7b. On his association with the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* and the quality of חסידות (*ḥasidut*), “love, devotion,” see above, note 416.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *YHVH is good to all, and His compassion is over all His creatures*. For the application of this verse to both divine and human kindness toward animals, see JT *Kil’ayim* 9:4, 32b; *Ketubbot* 12:3, 35a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3; BT *Bava Metsi’a* 85a; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 6; *Pesiqta Rabbati*, add. 1:1,195a–b. Cf. *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3 (and parallels), in the name of Abba Sha’ul: “Just as He is compassionate and kind, so you, too, be compassionate and kind.”

430. **All refers to Assembly of Israel…** Namely to *Shekhinah*, who is described as both *a spring of gardens* and *a well of living waters*. Her five sefirotic *gardens* can be identified as *Ḥesed, Gevurah, Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*, in the midst of which lies *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One). Alternatively, the blessed Holy One refers here to the highest sefirotic realm (or to *Ein Sof*), and the five gardens

are the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, with *Tif'eret* and *Yesod* considered together as one.

The "one spring above them" is the hidden realm of *Binah*, the Divine Mother, who nourishes all the lower *sefirot* with the flow of emanation. She and *Shekhinah* are mother and daughter, sharing the designation *spring*. *Shekhinah* is also described as "one garden below them," containing all the fruit of the higher gardens and guarded from demonic forces lurking outside, who are eager to penetrate the divine realm. The "other gardens" are lower worlds, fed by the flow from *Shekhinah*, who is the garden that "turns into a spring, watering them."

In *Shemot Rabbah* 20:5, the phrase *a well of living waters* is applied to the people of Israel. On the verse in Song of Songs being applied to *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel), see *Zohar* 1:132a, 135b; 3:21b, 266a, 298a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

On the sefirotic gardens, cf. *Bahir* 105 (159). On the identity of the five sefirotic gardens, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:143; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

431. **when necessary it becomes *a spring*...** When humans act virtuously, *Shekhinah* conveys the flow of emanation freely, like a gushing *spring*. However, when wickedness prevails, *Shekhinah* turns into *a well*, whose waters must be drawn by righteous heroes.

On *Shekhinah* as alternating between flowing freely and not, see *Zohar* 1:60a–b, 67a, 235a; 3:266a–b; above, notes 305–6.

432. **What is meant by *streams*?...** The five garden *sefirot* mentioned above turn into *a spring* watering *Shekhinah*. *Lebanon* symbolizes *Ḥokhmah*, from which issue the five *streams* (or sources).

The phrase "become *streams* for this *spring*" may mean that the five *sefirot* turn into *streams* serving as *a spring*

watering *Shekhinah*, or that these five *sefirot* turn into *streams* watering *Shekhinah* (who is Herself described as *a spring of gardens*).

433. ***When you besiege a city…*** A verse such as this—in fact, every single word of Torah—yields numerous meanings.

On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13. On the various levels of meaning in Torah, see Vol. 5, p. 34, n. 99.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *When you besiege a city many days, waging battle against it to seize it, you shall not destroy its trees* [literally: *its tree*], *wielding an axe against them; for you may eat from them* [or: *you shall eat from them*], *but you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a human, to withdraw before you in the siege?*

434. ***He shall be like a tree…*** Why is this verse adjoined to the preceding one?

According to its simple sense, the verse in Psalms promises that one who studies the word of God *shall be like a tree planted by streams of water*, but Rabbi Pinḥas construes this as an obligation to be fruitful in numerous realms of Torah.

The seven elements of the tree correspond to the seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*. The number ten alludes to all ten *sefirot*, or to ten aspects of each of the seven lower *sefirot*. The total of seventy alludes to the "seventy facets of Torah," on which see above, p. 34. n. 92.

The list here of various meanings of Torah includes seven components, with the seventh consisting of three pairs: "unfit and fit, impure and pure, forbidden and permitted." The phrase "רמז (*remez*), a hint, alluding to wisdom" refers to allegorical interpretation. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1084; cf. Vol. 5, p. 34, n. 99. On *gimatriyya'ot*, see the Glossary.

The context in Psalms reads: *But the teaching* [or: *Torah*] *of YHVH is his delight, and His teaching he murmurs*

[or: *and on His Torah he meditates*] *day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding its fruit in season, its leaf not withering, and whatever it produces thrives* [or:—*and in all that he does he prospers*].

435. **permission is given to the Destroyer to destroy…** See BT *Bava Qamma* 60a–b: “Rabbi Yosef taught: ‘What is the meaning of the verse *None of you shall go out from the entrance of his house until morning* (Exodus 12:22)? Once permission has been granted to the Destroyer, he does not distinguish between righteous and wicked.’… Our Rabbis taught: ‘A plague in town? Keep your feet indoors.’… Our Rabbis taught: ‘A plague in town? One should not walk in the middle of the road because the Angel of Death walks there, for as soon as permission has been granted him, he strides brazenly.’” See Vol. 6, p. 302, n. 117. Here Rabbi Pinḥas construes the verse from Deuteronomy as addressed to the Destroyer.

436. **Three consecutive days…** See M *Ta’anit* 3:4: “What constitutes a plague? If, in a city that can supply five hundred foot-soldiers, three deaths occur in three consecutive days, this constitutes a plague; less than this is no plague.”

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *When a woman has a flux of blood for many days, not in the time of her menstruation* [or: *her menstrual impurity*], *or when she has a flux beyond her menstruation, all the days of the flux of her impurity she shall be as in the days of her menstruation; she is impure*. According to a rabbinic interpretation, the phrase *for many days* in this verse implies “three days.”

See *Sifra, Metsora* 5:9, 79a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 13, p. 247; JT *Yoma* 2:5, 40a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:5; *Ester Rabbah* 2:2; BT *Ketubbot* 75a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:4; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 15; Rashi on Leviticus 15:25. On the phrase *many days* in the verse from Deuteronomy as signifying three days, see *Sifrei*,

Deuteronomy 203. On a plague lasting three days, see also 2 Samuel 24:13.

437. **Come, and I will instruct you…** God addresses the Destroyer.

The verse reads literally: *You shall not destroy* עצה (*etsah*), *its tree*, employing a collective noun in the singular. See above, note 433. On the tree in this verse as symbolizing a scholar, see BT *Ta'anit* 7a. Cf. Vol. 1, p. 29, n. 198. On a scholar as the Tree of Life, see *Zohar* 3:111a; *ZḤ* 49d.

438. **עצה (*Etsah*), *its tree*—the one who is עיטא (*eita*), counsel…** Rabbi Pinḥas plays with עצה (*etsah*), *its tree*, and the Hebrew עצה (*etsah*) and Aramaic עיטא (*eita*), both of which mean "counsel, advice."

439. ***For* ממנו תאכל (*mi-mennu tokhel*), *you shall eat from it…*** The verbal form *tokhel* can also mean *she shall eat*, and the word *mi-mennu* can also be translated *from him*. Rabbi Pinḥas applies the verb to *Shekhinah*, the "mighty Rock," from which holy souls are hewn. Also known as "the Holy Spirit," She is nourished and sustained by the righteous engaging in Torah, so *She shall eat from him*.

On the phrase "mighty Rock," see above, note 61. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see above, notes 433, 437.

440. ***I have eaten my honeycomb…*** The full verse reads: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked* [or: *gathered*] *my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*

According to a midrashic interpretation, this verse is spoken by God to Israel (His *bride*), and it refers to the Tabernacle (*my garden*) and the incense, sacrifices, and libations. Now that the Temple has been destroyed, God is nourished only by the devoted study of Torah; so He warns the Destroyer not to harm the righteous provider.

Cf. BT *Berakhot* 8a, in the name of Ulla: "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the blessed Holy One has

nothing in His world but four cubits of law."

On innovating words of Torah, see above, p. 145, n. 282; notes 99, 316. On the midrashic reading of the verse in Song of Songs, see *Sifrei Zuta*, 7:17; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 17b–18a; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 16, 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 24; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; Rashi on Song of Songs 5:1; *Zohar* 1:164a, 239b, 248a; 3:3b–4b, 7a–b, 226a–b, 240a–242a. On Israel sustaining God by sacrifices, see also Vol. 7, p. 31, n. 96.

The conclusion of the verse in Song of Songs can be construed either as *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—or as *Eat, companions, drink, and be drunk with love!* On the verse in Deuteronomy, see above, notes 433, 437, 439.

441. ***For* האדם (*ha-adam*), *the human, is a tree of the field*...** The simple sense of this clause is a rhetorical question: *For is the tree of the field a human, to withdraw before you in the siege?* Here Rabbi Pinḥas turns this into a declaration: *For the human is a tree of the field*. The definite article preceding *human* emphasizes that this particular *human*—the righteous one who engages in Torah—is well known: "renowned above and below."

For the transformation of the rhetorical question *For is the tree of the field a human...?* into a declaration, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 203; *Bereshit Rabbah* 26:6; 53:1; BT *Ta'anit* 7a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 8:9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 33; *Zohar* 2:60b.

442. **a great and mighty tree...** The righteous devotee of Torah resembles the sefirotic tree (whose trunk is *Tif'eret*), and he supports and nourishes *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as *a field that YHVH has blessed*.

The verse in Genesis describes Isaac the patriarch smelling the fragrance of the garments worn by his son Jacob (which were actually Esau's garments) when Jacob

sought Isaac's blessing: *He smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him and said, "See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH."* On this field as *Shekhinah*, see below, note 532.

443. **this phrase relates to the beginning of the verse…** For the full verse, see above, note 433. The righteous hero of the city advises his fellow citizens on how to mend their ways and save themselves from the Destroyer besieging them.

The shofar stimulates *teshuvah*. "Spiral trumpets" renders בוקינס (*buqinas*), based on Greek *bukane*, and Latin *bucina*, "spiral (or crooked) trumpet." See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:4; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:12; *Midrash Tehillim* 18:14; *Zohar* 2:189a. For the play on עצה (*etsah*), *its tree*, and עצה (*etsah*)—and Aramaic עיטא (*eita*)—"counsel, advice," see above at note 438.

444. **לבא מפניך (*Lavo mi-panekha*), *To withdraw before you…*** The phrase means literally *to come before you*, which Rabbi Pinḥas divides into two: *to come* to Me (i.e., to God), and to withdraw "because of you" (i.e., out of fear of the Destroyer). He construes *mi-panekha* as *mi-penei*, "because of," you.

445. **במצור (*Ba-matsor*), *In the siege…*** The word can also mean "stronghold, bastion" alluding here to the secret realm of *Binah*. Those who are stimulated by the righteous hero of the city to engage in *teshuvah* attain the bastion of *Binah*, who is Herself called *Teshuvah*.

On the unique status of "masters of *teshuvah*," see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "In the place where *ba'alei teshuvah* (masters of returning, or repentance) stand, the completely righteous cannot stand."

On this Talmudic passage, see above, note 166. On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*—from whom all emerges and to whom all ultimately return—see above, pp. 239–40, n. 21. *Binah* shares the description "mighty Rock" with *Shekhinah*. See above, note 439.

446. **They are mighty trees…** See above, note 437.

447. **planting these trees…** As described above at note 428.

448. ***He raised his eyes…*** The subject is Esau, and the context in Genesis (33:1–7) describes his reunion with Jacob after more than twenty years of separation: *Jacob raised his eyes and saw and, look, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah, Rachel, and the two slave-girls. He placed the slave-girls and their children first, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last. He himself passed before them and bowed to the ground seven times until he drew near his brother. Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him, and they wept. He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, "Who are these with you?" He said, "The children with whom God has favored your servant." The slave-girls drew near, they and their children, and they bowed low. Leah, too, and her children drew near, and they bowed low; and afterward Joseph and Rachel drew near and bowed low*.

According to Rabbi Shim'on, Jacob knew that Esau was lustful, so he protected Leah and especially Rachel. See *Zohar* 1:175a; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 33:2, n. 5; and cf. the following note.

449. ***and afterward Joseph and Rachel…*** Yet, according to Genesis 33:2 (quoted in the preceding note), *He placed the slave-girls and their children first, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last*—indicating that Joseph was behind Rachel. So how can Scripture now state *and afterward Joseph and Rachel*—indicating that Joseph was in front of Rachel?

Drawing on a midrashic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on explains that Joseph saw Esau ogling the women, so he came out from behind Rachel and covered her, thereby protecting her from Esau's evil eye and lustful designs.

In rabbinic literature Joseph is granted the title Righteous (or Righteous One) in recognition of his resisting the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. (See above, p. 103, n. 152.) Joseph symbolizes *Yesod*, the divine phallus, who is also known as Righteous One. (See above, p. 38, n. 105.) The measure of six cubits symbolizes the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, all included in the latter.

On the midrashic interpretation of *and afterward Joseph and Rachel*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 33:7; *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:10 (and Theodor and Mirkin, ad loc.); 90:4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 12, 49b, 53a; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 10; *Leqaḥ Tov, Sekhel Tov*, and *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 33:7; Rashi on Genesis 33:7; *Zohar* 1:175a; *ZḤ* 66c.

450. ***Balaam raised* עיניו (*einav*), *his eyes*...** In the Masoretic text the word עיניו (*einav*), *his eyes*, is spelled with two *yods*, but here Rabbi Shim'on claims that it is spelled with only one *yod*: עינו, which can be pronounced *eino, his eye* —alluding to his defective, evil eye.

On the spelling of עיניו (*einav*), see *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 24:2. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

On Balaam's defective vision, see above, note 390. On Balaam being evil-eyed, see above, note 133. The full verse reads: *Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped by its tribes, and the spirit of God was upon him*.

451. ***encamped by its tribes…*** Alluding specifically to the tribes of Joseph (namely of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh) and Benjamin, who are both immune to the evil eye. These three tribes camped together (see Numbers 2:18–24).

The verse in Genesis reads: בן פורת (*Ben porat*), *A fruitful son, is Joseph, a fruitful son* עלי עין (*alei ayin*), *by a spring*. Drawing on midrashic sources, Rabbi Shim'on interprets *porat* (*fruitful*) as referring to Joseph's enlarging himself to cover his mother. The phrase *alei ayin* (*by a spring*) now implies *overcoming the* [evil] *eye*.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:10 (and parallels cited above, note 449). On Joseph's being immune to the evil eye (based on the phrase *alei ayin*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97 (p. 1224); 97:3 (p. 1246); BT *Berakhot* 20a, 55b; *Sotah* 36b; *Bava Metsi'a* 84a; *Bava Batra* 118b. Cf. *Zohar* 3:130a (*IR*); above, p. 255, n. 28.

452. ***Between His shoulders he dwells…*** The full verse (recording Jacob's blessing of Benjamin) reads: *For Benjamin he said: Beloved of YHVH, he dwells securely; He shelters him constantly, and between his shoulders He dwells* [or: *and between His shoulders he dwells*].

453. **That wicked one…** Balaam threatened to remove the protective line formed by the tribes of Joseph (namely of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh) and Benjamin, so that his evil eye could glare against the rest of Israel. See above, note 451.

454. **Rachel was there…** Mother Rachel represents *Shekhinah*, and She protected Israel from Balaam's malevolent gaze.

She is also known as the Holy Spirit, or *the spirit of God*. According to the simple sense of the verse, of course, *the spirit of God was upon him* means that Balaam was inspired at this moment to bless Israel (instead of cursing them). But Rabbi Shim'on interprets this clause as meaning that *Shekhinah* hovered over Israel.

On Mother Rachel, see Jeremiah 31:15. On the phrase *upon him* (in the verse from Numbers) as referring to Israel, see BT *Bava Batra* 60a (per Isaac Alfasi and Asher ben Yeḥiel); *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *re'uyin*; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Numbers 24:2; below at note 645; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 24:2, n. 13.

455. **At first, the son covered the mother…** At first, Joseph covered his mother, Rachel, to protect her from Esau's evil gaze; now, Mother Rachel (*Shekhinah*) hovered over Her children to protect them from Balaam's evil gaze —as God had promised Joseph.

456. ***He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children…*** In the context in Genesis, the subject is Esau. Here, Rabbi Shim'on identifies Esau with Samael (or Satan), who on Yom Kippur accuses Israel (or all of humanity). By sending the scapegoat to Azazel (i.e., Satan), Israel ensures that this demonic force will be occupied, assuaged, and deterred from accusing them. Rabbi Shim'on associates this "gift" with the gift that Jacob offers to Esau so as to *appease his face*.

Satan sees *the women and the children* participating in the fast of Yom Kippur. His question מי אלה (*Mi elleh*), *Who are these, with you?* actually implies a declaration: "אלהים (*Elohim*), God, is *with you*"—since the "Holy Name" אלהים (*Elohim*) is composed of the letters of מי אלה (*mi elleh*). This Name refers to *Binah*, who is associated with Yom Kippur and *teshuvah*. Having been assuaged by the gift of the scapegoat, Satan confirms that *Binah* has granted forgiveness and "is *with you*." On *Elohim* as a combination of *mi* and *elleh*, see *Zohar* 1:2a, 3b–4a; 2:105a.

On the motif of the scapegoat as a gift (or bribe) to Satan, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46: "They gave him a bribe on Yom Kippur so that he would not nullify Israel's sacrifice." On this theme (and on assuaging demonic powers, in general), see also *Sifra, Millu'im* (*Shemini*) 1:3, 43c; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 16:8; Moses of Burgos,

Ammud ha-Semali, 158–59; *Zohar* 1:11a, 64a–65a, 89b (*ST*), 113b–114b, 138b, 145b, 174b, 190a, 210b, 247b; 2:33a, 111b, 130a, 141a, 152b, 154b, 157a–b, 169a, 181b, 184b–185a, 203b, 227a–b, 237b–239b, 242b, 266b (*Heikh*), 269a, 271b (*Piq*); 3:60b, 63a–64a, 63a–b (*Piq*), 79b, 101b–102a, 224a–b, 248a–b, 258b–259a; *ZḤ* 20c, 46c, 86b–c (*MhN, Rut*), 87b–c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 165–67; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 124–27; idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 49; idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 43; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:453–54, 3:890–95, 959.

The verse in Genesis 32 reads: *For he thought*, "פניו אכפרה (*akhapperah fanav*), *Let me appease his face, with the gift that goes before me; and afterward I will see his face—perhaps he will be kind to me*. The phrase *akhapperah fanav* means literally *Let me wipe* [the anger from] *his face*, or *Let me cover his face*. It can also be rendered *Let me propitiate him, placate him*. Cf. Proverbs 16:14; and see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1084.

The full verse in Genesis 33 reads: *He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, "Who are these with you?"* For the context, see above, note 448.

457. **asking about the children** Alternatively, *Who are these with you?* is indeed a question, posed by Satan. The significance of his question is soon explained.

458. ***The children whom God has graciously given your servant...*** Why did *Shekhinah* (represented here by Jacob) respond at all to Satan (represented by Esau)? Because having accepted the "bribe" of the scapegoat, Satan is transformed into an advocate for Israel. He thinks that Israel is fasting and engaging in *teshuvah* out of fear of his accusations.

On the scapegoat as "a bribe," see the passage in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46 (quoted above, note 456). On the transformation of the demonic Accuser into the Advocate, see *Zohar* 1:114b; 2:60b; 3:63a–b, 63a–b (*Piq*), 102a, 123a

(*RM*), 225a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 126–27. Cf. *Zohar* 1:144b, 174b; 2:185a (Vol. 6, p. 40, n. 104).

The verse in Genesis reads: *He said*, "*The children with whom God has favored your servant* [or: *whom God has graciously given your servant*]." For the context, see above, note 448.

459. **Granted, for you [to be fasting]...** Satan understands why the adults are fasting and engaging in *teshuvah*, but why the children?

460. **the Holy Spirit is speaking...** *Shekhinah* (known as the Holy Spirit) is answering Satan.

In the Masoretic text, above the word ויאמר (*va-yomar*), *He said*, appears an erect accent (or cantillation) sign, known as *zaqef gadol*. The name of this accent sign is hinted at by the wording here: "so the accent [זקיף (*zaqeif*),] stands erect." The sign's erect shape indicates the noble nature of *Shekhinah*. Furthermore, the fact that the subject of the verb is not named—that the word is written "in a concealed manner"—also points to *Shekhinah*. On the significance of an erect accent, see above, pp. 293–94, n. 141.

461. **would the Holy Spirit say *your servant*?...** How can *Shekhinah* refer to Herself as Satan's *servant*? Rabbi Shim'on explains that *your servant* actually refers here to Lilith, who is Satan's minister. *The children whom God has graciously given your servant* are children who were killed by Lilith in a previous incarnation without having sinned. Now that they have been reincarnated, they participate in fasting and *teshuvah*, presumably to cleanse themselves of the impurity of Lilith.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I went back and saw all the torments that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power—with no one to comfort them* [or: *From the hand of their violent tormentors, there is no one to comfort them*]. According to a midrashic interpretation of this verse, *the tormented* are

illegitimate children who are excluded from the community of Israel by the *power* of the Sanhedrin (*their tormentors*). Another interpretation indicates that *the tormented* are children who died on account of their fathers' sins. Here in the *Zohar*, the *tormentors* are Lilith and her cohorts, who kill innocent children.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 32:8; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1; *Zohar* 2:96a–b (Vol. 5, pp. 13–14, n. 38), 111a–b, 113a–b; 3:234a. On reincarnation in Kabbalah, see above, pp. 98–99, n. 140.

462. **As soon as he hears about those children…** Satan protests to God.

463. **at that time there is no diphtheria…** On Yom Kippur.

According to the *Zohar*, diphtheria is associated with Lilith, the demoness who attacks children. See *Zohar* 1:19b, 33b, 55a; 2:264b (*Heikh*), 267b (*Heikh*). On the origin of this disease, see also Vol. 5, p. 470, n. 798.

464. **That Accuser then becomes jealous…** Satan becomes jealous of Lilith and rescues the children from her grasp. In order to motivate him to do this, *Shekhinah* says to him, *The children whom God has graciously given your servant* [Lilith].

465. **When the prayers of Israel ascend on this day…** On Yom Kippur. *Shekhinah* Herself (known as the Holy Spirit) passes *before them*—that is, before the prayers, escorting them to Heaven.

The verse from Micah links the verb *pass* with מלכם (*malkam*), *their king*. By verbal analogy, this demonstrates that *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—or *Shekhinah*—is the subject of the verb *passed* in the verse from Genesis. The full verse in Genesis reads: *He himself passed before them and bowed to the ground seven times until he drew near his brother*.

466. **diminishing Himself toward the one above…** *Shekhinah* diminishes Herself toward *Tif'eret*. The "seven supernal rungs" are the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*

Herself. On *Shekhinah*'s diminishing Herself, see above, p. 288, n. 119.

467. ***Until he drew near his brother…*** *Shekhinah* is the Daughter of *Binah*, and Her *brother* is *Tif'eret*, the Son. *Tif'eret* is also known as *Raḥamim* (Compassion). *Shekhinah* is also known as Holy Spirit and Assembly of Israel.

468. **the hidden, concealed palace of Yom Kippur…** The merciful Divine Mother, *Binah*, who is associated (and identified) with Yom Kippur. Her concealed nature is reflected by the third-person wording *He will effect atonement*—since, in grammatical terminology, the third-person construction is known as נסתר (*nistar*), "concealed." See above, p. 252, n. 20.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *For on this day He will effect purgation* [or: *atonement*] *for you* [or: *purgation* (or: *atonement*) *will be effected for you*], *to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure*.

469. **Now, *the children*—these wise ones here…** Now, Rabbi Shim'on applies the phrase *the children* to his and Rabbi Pinḥas's Companions. On Rabbi Pinḥas and the Holy Spirit, cf. M *Sotah* 9:15 (quoted in Vol. 8, p. 7, n. 23).

470. **If I have come on this way…** Similar exclamations appear in rabbinic literature and often in the *Zohar*. See above, p. 114, n. 182.

471. **The blessed Holy One is here, confirming us…** By providing us with miraculous shade and water (as described above at note 428). The spring alludes to the spring of *Binah*, and the three trees to *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This sefirotic triad is also called Cedars of Lebanon—namely of *Ḥokhmah*.

472. **one over the head…** On the triad of Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi Pinḥas, and Rabbi El'azar, see below, pp. 846–47, n. 234.

Rabbi Pinḥas refers to Rabbi El'azar as his son because, according to the *Zohar*, Rabbi Pinḥas is Rabbi Shim'on's

father-in-law; so Rabbi El'azar is his (grand)son. See above, note 402.

473. **He rose and kissed him** Rabbi Pinḥas rose and kissed Rabbi El'azar.

474. **utter before your Master His words!** That is, "Speak words of Torah before God!"

475. ***My people, remember now…*** The prophet Micah points to this example of divine compassion. The phrase *from Shittim to Gilgal* refers to Israel's crossing the Jordan. See Joshua 3:1; 3:14–4:20.

For a similar parable, see *Zohar* 3:115a (Vol. 8, p. 244). On the verse from Micah, see *Zohar* 3:112a–113a.

476. **So in all kinds of ways…** God punishes Israel for their sins, yet they stubbornly persist in wrongdoing. Eventually their suffering is felt by God Himself, who then pleads with His children to alleviate the pain being experienced above and below by engaging in *teshuvah*.

God declares that He has placed Israel above the angels (the members of His palace) and above all earthly rulers (as it were). The concluding sentence refers to suffering that Israel considers unjust.

In the Masoretic text of Isaiah, the word *lo* is spelled לא, with an א (*alef*), meaning *not*—which could yield the sense *In all their affliction* צר לא (*lo tsar*), *He was not afflicted*. However, the word is traditionally read as לו (*lo*), with a ו (*vav*), yielding exactly the opposite sense: *In all their affliction* צר לו (*lo tsar*), *He was afflicted*. See above, note 318.

The full verse in Lamentations reads: *Their appearance is darker than coal, they are not recognized in the streets; their skin has shriveled on their bones, it has become dry as wood*. The full verse in Micah reads: *My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Testify against Me*.

477. **And the Torah doesn't consider Balak anything…** He is far less evil than the wicked Laban (Jacob's uncle and father-in-law), who nearly destroyed the patriarch.

According to Deuteronomy 26:5, when an Israelite brings the offering of first fruits to the priest, he recites a brief account of the people's history, beginning: ארמי אבד אבי (*Arami oved avi*), *An Aramean astray* [or: *wandering, fugitive, perishing*] *was my father*, probably referring to Jacob or Abraham. Later, this clause was interpreted to mean: *An Aramean was destroying my father*, referring to Laban the Aramean's attempt to destroy Jacob. See the Septuagint, ad loc.; Passover Haggadah; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 301; *Midrash Tanna'im, Targum Onqelos*, and Rashi, Deuteronomy 26:5. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; and Hoffman's note 5 on the passage in *Midrash Tanna'im*.

The passage breaks off at the end of this paragraph, interrupting the conclusion of the saga of Rabbi Pinḥas (which begins above at note 402). The verse in Numbers reads: *My people, remember please* [or: *now*].

478. **... The image and form of His Father...** This fragment (extending below to p. 446 at n. 490) belongs to the section *Rav Metivta* (Head of the Academy), which is an account of a visionary journey undertaken by Rabbi Shim'on and the Companions to the Garden of Eden, and the mysteries they hear from the head of the Heavenly Academy. Here, a spiritual messenger is addressing the group. The fragment was printed here in *Parashat Balaq* because of its interpretation of Numbers 23:9–10. See above, p. 54, n. 1; Scholem.

The Divine Son (*Tif'eret*) bears the stamp of His Father, *Ḥokhmah*, who is symbolized by the letter י (*yod*). *Tif'eret* Himself is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*), whose shape represents an extension of י (*yod*)—or a step extending from the womb of the Divine Mother (*Binah*), in which the primordial *yod* grew.

The speaker interprets the word אשורנו (*ashurennu*), *I will gaze upon him*, based on the noun אשר (*ashur*), "step," which yields the sense ומגבעות אשורנו (*u-mi-geva'ot ashurennu*), *and from*

hills I will step. The significance of the word *u-mi-geva'ot, and from hills*, is clarified below.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Numbers reads: *When from the cliff tops I see him* [or: *them*], *and from hills I gaze upon him—look, a people that dwells alone* [or: *apart*], *among nations it is not reckoned*. On this verse, see Levine, *Numbers*, 2:173–75.

479. **In the Supreme Academy: גבעת (*geva'ot*), *hills*...** In this highest realm the word גבעת (*geva'ot*), *hills*, is spelled deficiently—that is, without the letter ו (*vav*)—whereas in the Heavenly Academy (situated beneath the Supreme Academy), the word is spelled with a *vav*: גבעות (*geva'ot*).

The "deficient" spelling in the Supreme Academy alludes to *Binah*, "loftiest of all" because the lack of the letter *vav* signifies that the Son, *Tif'eret*, has not yet appeared, but is still gestating within the Divine Mother.

The full spelling—with the vav—in the Heavenly Academy, alludes to two aspects of being. One is the intimacy of the Divine Son, *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) with Mother *Binah*. The other is the intimacy of the Messianic son with his mother, *Shekhinah*, who is known as "this hill below," one of the two גבעות (*geva'ot*), *hills*. When the Davidic Messiah comes, he will be brought to *Binah*, who is the higher hill ("Higher *Giva't*"). Thus he emerges *mi-geva'ot, from hills*—from the two divine hills.

In the Masoretic text, the word is spelled with a *vav*: ומגבעות (*u-mi-geva'ot*), *and from hills*. See *Minḥat Shai*'s discussion on the verse; cf. Genesis 49:26. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

The "deficient" spelling גבעת (*geva'ot*), *hills*, is read here as a singular: גבעת (*giv'at*), *hill* (*of*). On the two divine *hills*, see *Zohar* 1:50a, 247b; 2:22a. On *hills* as signifying the matriarchs, see below, note 602. On the distinction between the Supreme Academy and the Heavenly Academy (or the

Academy of the Firmament), headed by Metatron, see above, p. 67, n. 43.

480. ***Let me tell to the decree…*** The speaker in this psalm is God's chosen king, who is identified here with the Messiah.

The simple sense of the verse is *Let me tell* אל חק (*el ḥoq*), *of the decree*; but here the speaker reads this hyperliterally: *Let me tell el ḥoq, to the decree*—that is, "Let me announce the good news of my arrival to *Shekhinah*," who conveys the divine commands and is thus known as חק (*ḥoq*), *decree*.

The Name *YHVH* refers here to *Binah*, who participates (along with *Shekhinah*) in the emergence of the Messiah and tells him *You are My son; today I have begotten you*.

The verse in Psalms reads: *Let me tell of the decree of YHVH. He said to me: "You are My son; today I have begotten you"* [or: *Let me tell of the decree. YHVH said to me…*].

481. **She will bring him out from under Her wings…** *Binah* will bring out the Messiah, son of David. Meanwhile, within *Shekhinah* (known as *decree*) lies a secondary Messianic figure, descended from Joseph, who will be vitalized within Her, not within *Binah* (as occurred to the Messiah, son of David). *Shekhinah* (known as Lower *Giv'ah*) has no life of Her own, only what is conveyed to Her from *Binah* by *Tif'eret*. So the Messiah, son of Joseph, who issues from Her, is destined to die heroically in battle with the enemies of God and Israel before the ultimate triumph of the Messiah, son of David. Eventually, the Messiah, son of Joseph, will be reanimated by *Shekhinah* and rise from the dead.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the figure of Messiah, son of Joseph, see above, p. 78, n. 71.

482. **in the Heavenly Academy:** ומגבעות **(*u-mi-geva'ot*)…** As explained above, note 479. The presence of the (second)

vav alludes both to *Tif'eret* included within *Binah* and to the Messiah, son of David, included within *Shekhinah*.

In the Supreme Academy, the word is spelled ומגבעת (*u-mi-geva'ot*), without the (second) *vav*. This spelling alludes to the realm of *Binah*, within whom the Son, *Tif'eret*—symbolized by *vav*—is still gestating. The lack of the letter alludes to an absence of difficulty or doubt. Such a sublime absence characterizes the Supreme Academy—as well as *Binah*, who manifests a clear and confident state of mind.

On the lack of difficulty or doubt in the Supreme Academy, see *ZḤ* 36b (*RR*). See also *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

483. **The whole perfect union is here...** By reciting the opening line of the *Shema*—*Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one!*—a person can unify God. Specifically, the threefold Name *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH* alludes to (and unifies) the sefirotic realms of *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Tif'eret* (or perhaps *Da'at*).

The phrase in Numbers—*from the cliff tops*—refers to *Ḥokhmah*, who is *the top* (or *head*) of the sefirotic *cliffs* (perhaps specifically *Binah* and *Tif'eret*). *Binah* is the "stock" of the Messiah, son of David; and *Tif'eret* (or *Da'at*) is identified with the "path." Mention of the path recalls the secret passage between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, which is described as *a path unknown to any bird of prey* (Job 28:7). See above, p. 201, n. 44.

The phrase "air ascending" alludes to *Keter*, who is sometimes described as אוירא דכיא (*aveira dakhya*), "pure air." Here, this rarefied air surrounds or infuses the head of *Ḥokhmah*. The paragraph breaks off in the middle of the concluding sentence.

Medieval Christian polemics asserted that the three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema* signify the Trinity. Here, instead, the *Zohar* presents a kabbalistic triad. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:972–74; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 18–19; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140–45.

On the significance of the *Shema*, see above, note 271. On the various sefirotic interpretations of *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:972–73. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 478. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *A shoot will emerge from the stock* [or: *stump*] *of Jesse, a sprout will flower from his roots*.

484. **in two Academies…** Namely, the Heavenly Academy and the Supreme Academy. In the last sentence, the spiritual messenger addresses Rabbi Shim'on. See above, notes 478–79.

485. **How great the measure…** Of the sefirotic "path" (*Tif'eret* or *Da'at*).

The phrase "extension of אחד (*eḥad*), *one*" alludes to the rabbinic tradition of prolonging the pronunciation of this last word of the first line of the *Shema*. (See BT *Berakhot* 13b.) The "six aspects" are the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, which all flow into *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by ד (*dalet*), the last letter of אחד (*eḥad*). By reciting this potent line, a person can unify the sefirotic couple, who thereby *dwells alone*.

486. ***Among the nations it is not reckoned…*** Unlike other languages, which are merely conventional, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet signify divine potencies, which are revealed to one who contemplates these letters. The nations of the world have "no (holy) script and language"; lacking awareness of the holiness of Hebrew, they cannot appreciate the mystery of *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*.

According to Maimonides (following the view of Averroes), languages are conventional and not natural. See *Guide of the Perplexed* 2:30. On the unique status of Hebrew, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 2:66–78.

The full verse in Jeremiah (describing idols) reads: *They are vanity, objects of mockery* [or: *works of delusion*]; *in the time of their punishment they will perish*. Here the description is applied to the idolators or Gentiles in general.

487. ***Who has counted the dust of Jacob…*** The primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* contains potentially within Himself both stock and path. (See above, note 483.) This supernal point is concealed and cannot be questioned or explored. But as it begins to expand and form the palace of *Binah*, the name מי (*Mi*), *Who*, pertains. Although a person may inquire about *Binah*, he should not expect any clear or conclusive answers about Her nature. Rather, the mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See Simeon Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:91a: "Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer." See above, p. 239, n. 21.

The concluding sentence alludes to *Tif'eret*, who constitutes the "form" of *Ḥokhmah*. As *Tif'eret* is generated, so is *Shekhinah*, "His Female, in the image of His Mother," *Binah*. See above, note 478.

The verse in Numbers reads: *Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered* את רבע (*rova*), *the dust-cloud* [or: *seed*; *quarterland*; (*even*) *a fourth*] *of, Israel*? The meaning of the unusual term *rova* is unclear. The rendering *seed* is based on the root רבע (*rv'*), "to copulate." See Milgrom, *Numbers*; and Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, on the verse; Levine, *Numbers*, 2:175–77. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:105b; 3:210b–211a.

488. **Who is *Mi*?…** The primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*—symbolized by the letter י (*yod*)—extends in two directions to become the palace of *Binah*. *Ḥokhmah* (pictured as the head) contains potentially within Himself both stock and path. He generates *Tif'eret*—whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel)—symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*). Similarly, He generates *Tif'eret*'s female partner, *Shekhinah*.

489. **מנה (*Manah*), *has counted…*** The speaker associates this verb with its other conjugation, meaning "to appoint, provide," and with the noun מנה (*manah*), "portion." *Ḥokhmah* gave *Tif'eret* the gift of *Shekhinah*, who was "from Him," that is, half of an androgynous whole. *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are

also pictured as “Son and Daughter” and symbolized by “heaven and earth.”

On the simultaneous creation of heaven and earth, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:15; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:1; *Midrash Shemu’el* 5:1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 19; *Zohar* 3:81b. The verse in Daniel reads: *The king provided them a daily amount of the royal food and of the wine he drank*.

490. **רובע ישראל (*Rova Yisra’el*), *a fourth of Israel…*** Alluding to *Yesod*, the divine phallus symbolized by the “covenant” of circumcision. This *sefirah* is described here as one-fourth the size of the trunk of the divine body, *Tif’eret Yisra’el* (Beauty of Israel).

Cf. below, note 611. On the meaning of *rova*, see above, note 487. On the jump in pagination (from 3:204a to 3:206b), see above, note 36.

491. ***Balak son of Zippor saw…*** The context in Numbers (22:2–4) describes the reaction of Balak, king of Moab, to the approach of the Israelites: *Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. Moab was very terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab loathed the Children of Israel. Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now, this assembly will lick up* [or: *chew up*] *everything around us as the ox licks up the grass of the field.” Balak son of Zippor was king over Moab at that time*.

In numerous manuscripts (including Es3, M9, N10, N36, N38, P5, Pr13, R1, V18, V19) *Parashat Balak* begins with the following paragraph (“Rabbi Yose opened…”).

492. ***Do not eat the bread…*** Rabbi Yose interprets this as “*Do not* accept any blessings from Balaam, who exercised his *evil eye, nor desire his* offerings.

The verse in Proverbs reads: *Do not eat the bread of* עין רע (*ra ayin*), *a stingy one* [literally: *him who has an evil eye*], *nor desire his delicacies*. On this verse, see BT *Sotah* 38b; *Zohar* 1:144a; 2:3a; 3:104a, 147b. On Balaam’s evil eye,

see above, note 133. On Balaam's offerings, see Numbers 23.

493. **When Balak saw…** That Sihon (king of the Amorites) and Og (king of Bashan) had been defeated and killed by the Israelites. But Rabbi Yose seeks a deeper meaning of the verb *saw*. Balak foresaw that he and five Midianite kings would be defeated by the Israelites. But he did not perceive clearly, so he approached Balaam, whose verbal skills matched those of Israel in prayer.

On the death of the Midianite kings, see Numbers 31:8: *They killed the kings of Midian, besides their slain men—Evi and Rekem and Tsur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian—and Balaam son of Beor they killed by the sword*. Cf. *Targum Yonatan*, ad loc.

On Balaam's oral power, see above at note 352. On the power of Israel's mouth, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:10; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 4; *Zohar* 1:177b–178a.

494. **Balaam was even more eager…** To curse Israel. See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 5.

At night, Balaam learned from demonic forces, pictured as both crowns and donkeys. His own jenny (female donkey), as well, derived from the demonic left side, and as night began the male demonic "donkeys" united with her. See below, note 497.

The image of donkeys "in the first watch of the night" derives from BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "In the first watch [of the night], a donkey brays; in the second, dogs bark; in the third, a child sucks from its mother's breast, and a woman converses with her husband." See *Zohar* 1:242b; 2:41b (*RM*), 46a; 3:107b; *ZḤ* 47c. On the demonic nature of the donkey, see above, p. 70, n. 48. On Balaam's knowledge of the lower crowns, see *Zohar* 2:21b–22a (*MhN*); below at notes 522, 545–46.

495. ***Elohim came to Balaam in the night…*** So how can it be that Balaam engaged then with demonic forces?

Rabbi Yose explains that here *Elohim* refers to the heavenly power appointed over the demonic donkeys, who was approaching Balaam to prevent him from cursing Israel. Similarly, the heavenly power appointed over Laban approached him. Balaam told King Balak's chieftains *Lodge here tonight* because night was the domain of the heavenly power over demonic donkeys (who is known as *Elohim*). See *Zohar* 3:112b–113a.

The sentence "All is one entity" means that the name *Elohim* refers to various forces. According to rabbinic interpretation, the name *Elohim* signifies Judgment; and in the *Zohar*, this name can refer to harsh and even demonic powers. On the equivocal nature of the term *Elohim*, see above, note 395. On negative powers appearing more frequently at night, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 74:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlaḥ* 24.

Numbers 22:20 reads in full: *God came to Balaam in the night and said to him, "If these men have come to call you, rise, go with them. But only the word that I speak to you shall you do*." The full verse in Genesis reads: *God came to Laban the Aramean in a night-dream and said to him, "Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or evil."* Numbers 22:8 reads in full: *And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will reply to you as YHVH will speak to me." And the chieftains of Moab stayed with Balaam*.

496. **When that prince would arrive…** When the heavenly power appointed over the demonic donkeys would appear, Balaam copulated with his earthly donkey, who then conveyed to him information from above. The phrase "that spirit" refers to the spirit of impurity.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Balaam committed bestiality with his donkey. The *Zohar* indicates that Balaam did so in order to draw down upon himself an impure spirit. See BT *Sanhedrin* 105a–b, *Avodah Zarah* 4b; *Zohar* 1:125b–126a; 2:21b (*MhN*), 263b–264a (*Heikh*); 3:107b;

ZḤ 47c; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 14–15 (18); idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 75.

497. **male donkeys roam…** As night begins, demonic male forces roam. Balaam "set his jenny at a prepared spot," making her available to them. Then, the heavenly power appointed over the demonic donkeys came and conveyed knowledge to Balaam through the jenny.

498. **Since one night he told him…** Since the heavenly power (called *Elohim*) already told Balaam not to go with King Balak's chieftains, why did Balaam request permission a second time? Because, Rabbi Yose explains, all heavenly powers are subject to divine authority, so their message can be changed.

See BT *Makkot* 10b: "Rabbah son of Bar Ḥana said in the name of Rabbi Huna (some say, Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi El'azar), 'From the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings it can be demonstrated that on the path one wishes to take he is led. From the Torah, as is written: *You shall not go with them* (Numbers 22:12); and then it is written: *Rise, go with them* (ibid., 20)."

Cf. BT *Yoma* 38b–39a: "Resh Lakish said: '… If one comes to defile himself, they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.'… Our rabbis taught: *'Do not become impure with them, becoming impure through them* (Leviticus 11:43). If one defiles himself slightly, he is defiled greatly; [if one defiles himself] below, he is defiled from above; in this world, he is defiled in the world that is coming.' Our rabbis taught: '*You shall hallow yourselves and become holy* (ibid., 44). If one sanctifies himself slightly, he is sanctified greatly; below, he is sanctified from above; in this world, he is sanctified in the world that is coming.'"

On the passage in *Makkot*, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:12; *Zohar* 1:53b–54a, 195b, 198b; 2:50a; 3:47a. On the passage in *Yoma*, see BT *Shabbat* 104a, *Avodah Zarah* 55a, *Menaḥot* 29b. Numbers 22:12

reads in full: *God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for it is blessed."* For Numbers 22:20, see above, note 495.

499. **Where is my honor...** Balaam (whose mouth was so potent) resented having his speech subject to divine control. He discovered that through his jenny he could contact demonic forces and be empowered by them. See above, note 496.

500. **Among these lower crowns...** The demonic forces are arrayed right and left, like the sefirotic crowns.

501. **When Joseph parted from his father...** Before leaving Jacob and being sold by his brothers, Joseph knew the wisdom of the *sefirot*. In Egypt he gained knowledge of demonic wisdom, about which he hinted to his father by sending *ten male donkeys... and ten jennies*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *To his father he sent as follows: ten male donkeys conveying from the best of Egypt, and ten jennies conveying grain and bread and food for his father for the journey*.

502. **Those on the right all merge...** The demonic male donkeys on the right merge into one called חמור (*ḥamor*), "donkey, male donkey."

The command in Deuteronomy against plowing *with an ox and a donkey together* is understood as a warning not to stimulate the union of two threatening forces. See above, p. 70, n. 48.

The concluding sentence alludes to the description of the Messianic king in Zechariah 9:9 (quoted below): *Humble and riding on a donkey*. Here the image implies that the Messiah will subdue the demonic forces (along with their nations on earth). See *Zohar* 1:238a.

503. **Those on the left...** The demonic female donkeys on the left merge into one called אתון (*aton*), "jenny." From her issues a force called עירה (*iroh*), a word that appears in Genesis 49:11 (discussed in the following paragraph): *He*

binds to the vine עירה (*iroh*), *his he-ass*. According to Rabbi Yose, *iroh* represents a threat to children. See *Zohar* 1:239b.

The full verse in Zechariah (describing the Messianic king) reads: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king is coming to you, righteous and victorious is he, humble* [or: *poor*] *and riding on a donkey—on* עיר (*ayir*), *a he-ass, foaled by* אתנות (*atonot*), *a she-ass* [or: *jenny*].

The word *atonot* is a plural form, apparently functioning in this verse as an indeterminate singular, implying "some she-ass." In the Masoretic text it is spelled אֲתֹנוֹת (*atonot*), with a ו (*vav*) following the נ (*nun*). Here Rabbi Yose indicates a slightly different spelling אֲתוֹנֹת (*atonot*), with a *vav* following the first ת (*tav*). This "deficient" spelling—lacking the *vav* following the *nun*—allows for a pseudo-singular reading: אֲתוֹנַת (*atonat*), *a she-ass*, which actually matches the simple sense of the verse. The apparently plural form has turned into a singular, just as the ten demonic jennies merge into one.

On the plural form functioning as an indeterminate singular, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §124o. Cf. Song of Songs 2:9. On the exact spelling of אתנות (*atonot*) in the verse from Zechariah, see *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

504. ***He binds* לגפן עירה (*la-gefen iroh*), *to the vine his he-ass*...** According to Rabbi Shim'on, this now means that God intends to bind *la-gefen*, *for the vine*—that is, for the sake of Israel, who are likened to a vine—*iroh*, *his he-ass*, namely the demonic force that threatens them.

The continuation of the verse—ולשורקה בני אתנו (*ve-la-soreqah beni atono*), *to the noble vine his she-ass's foal*—conveys a similar message: *Ve-la-soreqah*, *For the noble vine* (i.e., since the people of Israel are called *noble vine*), God will subdue *his she-ass's foal*—that is, any demonic force issuing from the chief אתון (*aton*), "she-ass, jenny."

On Israel as a vine, see Vol. 3, p. 447, n. 687. The full verse in Genesis (recording Jacob's blessing of Judah) reads: *He binds to the vine* עירה (*iroh*), *his he-ass, to the noble vine* בני אתנו (*beni atono*), *his she-ass's foal. He washes in wine his garment, in the blood of grapes his cloak*. The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *I planted you as a noble vine, of entirely faithful seed. How then did you turn before Me into a corrupt, alien vine?*

505. **These ten on the right and ten on the left…** The ten male demonic forces on the right and the corresponding female forces on the left are "all included in these two," namely in *ḥamor* (male donkey) and *aton* (she-ass, jenny), as indicated above at notes 502–3. Now Rabbi Yose explains that this entire constellation of twenty demonic forces is just one of two. This first one is called קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry*, while the second (consisting of a different demonic species) is called נחש (*naḥash*), *sorcery*.

On the distinction between *qesem* and *naḥash*, see above, note 183. Numbers 23:23 reads: *Surely there is no* נחש (*naḥash*), *omen* [or: *sorcery*], *in Jacob, no* קסם (*qesem*), *divination* [or: *wizardry*], *in Israel*. Numbers 23:21 reads: *YHVH his God is with him, the King's trumpet blast in his midst*. For several interpretations of the identity and grouping of the various demonic forces, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

506. שור **(*shor*), an ox…** One of the two demonic forces alluded to in Deuteronomy 22:10: *Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together*. (See above, note 502.) The force identified with the second animal (*a donkey*) issues from the side of *qesem*, *wizardry*.

507. **since Balaam knew…** He resented being bound to divine authority, but finally he discovered that through his jenny he could contact demonic forces, be empowered by them, and exert control. See above, note 499. For the full verse quoted here (Numbers 22:20), see above, note 495.

508. ***Balaam rose early in the morning and saddled his jenny…*** So that through her he could contact demonic powers and draw curses down upon Israel. God became incensed, because Balaam was rejecting His authority. According to Rabbi Yose, the clause *because* הוא הולך (*holekh hu*), *he was going*, implies "because Balaam was daring to act on his own."

The biblical context (Numbers 22:21–22) reads: *Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his jenny, and he went with the chieftains of Moab. And God's wrath flared because he was going, and the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed himself in the road as an adversary to him, and he was riding on his jenny, and his two lads were with him*.

Here, instead of ויקם בלעם (*Va-yaqom bil'am*), *Balaam rose, in the morning*, the Zoharic author writes וישכם בלעם (*Va-yashqem bil'am*), *Balaam rose early, in the morning*. An even smaller change appears in the closing quotation (from Numbers 22:20), where instead of אך (*Akh*), *But, only the word* [*that I speak to you shall you do*], the author writes: אפס (*Efes*), *Nevertheless, only the word* [*that I speak to you shall you do*]. See Numbers 22:35; and cf. above, note 503.

509. ***Rise, go with them…*** The full verse reads: *God came to Balaam in the night and said to him, "If these men have come to call you, rise, go with them. But only the word that I speak to you shall you do."* See the end of the preceding note.

510. **you are preparing and girding your weapon…** Preparing the jenny. For the context of the verse in Numbers, see above, note 508.

511. **He left and engaged in a different craft…** Since the name *YHVH* designates Compassion, *the angel of YHVH* had mastered that craft. When confronting Balaam, however, he conveyed the opposite quality, Judgment. The wording *as an adversary to him* now alludes to the transformation of the angel, who was normally not adversarial but compassionate.

On the wicked turning Compassion into Judgment, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman: "Woe to the wicked, who turn the Attribute of Compassion into the Attribute of Judgment!" See *Bereshit Rabbah* 73:3; *Zohar* 2:63a; 3:15b, 30b, 65a, 79a, 122a, 137b (*IR*). Cf. Vol. 8, pp. 132–33, n. 229.

On this *Zohar* passage, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:13; *Zohar* 1:119b. Cf. Rashi on Numbers 22:22. On the name *YHVH* as signifying Compassion, see above, p. 240, n. 21.

512. **The angel did not change…** He remained an angel of Compassion, but this very quality—being diametrically opposed to the nature of Balaam—nullified the latter's evil designs.

Cf. *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 22:22: "*The angel of YHVH stationed himself* [*in the road as an adversary to him*]—he was *an angel* to Israel, and *an adversary* to Balaam."

513. **when he gazed to find counsel…** The only way that Balaam could escape divine control was through engaging with his jenny, thereby contacting demonic forces and being empowered by them to curse Israel. See above, notes 496, 499, 507; David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *Mar'ot ha-Tsove'ot*, 215.

514. ***because* הולך הוא (*holekh hu*), *he was going*…** On his own and rejecting divine authority. See above, note 508. On the concluding sentence, see above, note 512.

515. **Until now, *YHVH* is not written…** According to Rabbi Shim'on, the name *YHVH* (signifying Compassion) does not appear in the Balaam story until this verse, since such a holy name "is unbefitting for" Balaam's sorcery. Now the name *YHVH* suddenly appears—in the phrase *the angel of YHVH*—to nullify Balaam's wisdom and divert his jenny from the way of sorcery. Therefore the verse reads *the angel of YHVH*, and not *the angel of Elohim*, which signifies Judgment. Cordovero suggests (in *Or Yaqar*) that from Judgment the demonic forces could draw nourishment.

See the preceding paragraph and above, note 512. Actually, the name *YHVH* appears twice earlier in the story, spoken by Balaam (Numbers 22:18–19). On the names *YHVH* and *Elohim* as signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, p. 240, n. 21.

The context in Numbers (22:23–25) reads: *The jenny saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed in the road, his sword unsheathed in his hand, and the jenny swerved from the road and went into the field, and Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road. But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of* [or: *through*] *the vineyards, a fence on one side and a fence on the other. And the jenny saw the angel of YHVH and pressed herself against the wall, pressing Balaam's leg against the wall, and once more he struck her*.

516. **I will remove your load and your bundle…** Thereby nullifying sorcery. On the concluding sentence, see above at note 512.

517. ***The jenny saw the angel of YHVH…*** For the context in Numbers, see above, note 515.

518. **that that wicked one…** That Balaam would be able to see *the angel of YHVH*.

519. ***falling and eyes uncovered…*** The full verse describes Balaam's expertise, technique, and visionary experience: *Utterance of one who hears God's sayings, who beholds a vision of Shaddai, falling with eyes uncovered* [literally: *falling and eyes uncovered*]. It seems, then, that Balaam did behold divine visions.

520. **I haven't heard anything…** Following the principle expressed by Rabbi Shim'on (in *Zohar* 1:5a): "I beg of you not to utter a word of Torah that you do not know and have not heard fittingly from a lofty tree [i.e., a recognized authority]."

See BT *Berakhot* 27b, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "One who says something that he has not heard from his teacher causes *Shekhinah* to depart from Israel." Cf. *Kallah*

Rabbati, 2; *Zohar* 1:5a; 2:37a, 86b–87a, 151b, 153a; 3:76a–b, 240b; below at note 524. Four of these *Zohar* passages include the same statement as here: "I haven't heard anything about this, so I cannot say," or simply, "I haven't heard, so I cannot say."

This conservative attitude contrasts with the *Zohar*'s frequent emphasis on innovation. See above, p. 145, n. 282; and the striking formulations of Jacob ben Sheshet (*Ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 364, 370): "It is a *mitsvah* for every wise person to innovate in Torah according to his capacity.… Do not think that this is far-fetched. If I had not invented it in my mind, I would say that it was transmitted to Moses at Sinai."

521. **when he needed to gaze…** When Balaam wished to attain a vision, he would initiate this by falling on the ground (and perhaps other techniques); but now he was simply riding his donkey on the road and was in no need of visions.

522. **If so, he occupied a higher rung…** If Balaam could attain a full divine vision any time he wished, then he outshone all the biblical prophets, whose visions were relatively rare. Yet Rabbi Shim'on insisted that Balaam had contact only with the demonic lower crowns.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balaam son of Beor*, הקוסם (*ha-qosem*), *the soothsayer, the Children of Israel killed by the sword with the rest of their slain*. On the demonic nature of קסם (*qesem*), "soothsaying, divination, wizardry," see above, note 505.

523. **By one vision that he beheld momentarily…** By gazing just this once upon *the angel of YHVH*, Balaam's eyes were damaged. So how could he gaze often directly at God's glory?

On Balaam's defective vision, see above, note 390. The full verse in Numbers reads: *YHVH unveiled* [or: *uncovered*] *Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed in the road, his sword unsheathed in his hand,*

and he prostrated himself and bowed down on his face. Here, the *Zohar* quotes the first clause as *Elohim unveiled Balaam's eyes*.

524. **I respond to you…** Rabbi Yitsḥak realizes that neither he nor Rabbi Yose has fathomed the meaning of the description of Balaam: *falling and eyes uncovered*.

On the concluding sentence, see above, note 520; *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The clause "I respond to you" renders אהדרנא לקבלך (*ahadarna lo-qovlakh*), "I return toward you." Other possible renderings include: "I am coming around toward your opinion"; "I retract in favor of your opinion" (*Or Yaqar*); "I simply answered your question" (Soncino); "I take back what I said against you" (*Sullam*; Berg); "I reply against you" (Scholem; Edri); "I am returning to your words" (*Matoq mi-Devash*). Cf. below, notes 529–30.

The word "clarification" renders צחותא (*tsaḥuta*), which in Aramaic means "thirst," but here conveys the sense of the Hebrew word צחות (*tsaḥut*), "clarity." See the Talmudic Aramaic saying: "Legal discussion requires צילותא (*tsiluta*), clarity, like a day of the north wind." See BT *Eruvin* 65a; *Megillah* 28b; *Targum*, Song of Songs 6:7; *Zohar* 1:72a, 89b (*ST*); 2:89a; 3:23a, 46a, 221b, 266b; *ZḤ* 13d (*MhN*); Scholem, *Major Trends*, 389, n. 49; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 157.

525. ***What is a human that You are mindful of him?…*** According to a rabbinic tradition, this verse was spoken by angels. See BT *Sanhedrin* 38b (in the name of Rav): "When the blessed Holy One sought to create the human being, He [first] created a cohort of ministering angels and asked them, 'Is it your desire that we make the human being in our image?' They responded, 'Master of the Universe, what are his deeds?' He replied, 'Such and such are his deeds.' They exclaimed, 'Master of the Universe, *What is a human that You are mindful of him, a human being that You take note of him?* (Psalms 8:5).' He stretched out His little finger among them and burned them. The

same thing happened with a second cohort. The third cohort said to Him, 'Master of the Universe, the former ones who spoke in Your presence—what did they accomplish? The entire world is Yours! Whatever You wish to do in Your world, do it.' When He reached the members of the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion [the Tower of Babel], whose deeds were corrupt, they [the angels] said to Him, 'Master of the Universe, didn't the first ones speak well?' He responded, *'Till your old age, I am He; till you turn gray, I will carry you*. [*I have made and I will bear; I will carry and deliver*] (Isaiah 46:4).'"

On this Talmudic passage, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:5–6; 31:12; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:23; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 8; *Beḥuqqotai* 4; *Ḥuqqat* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beḥuqqotai* 6; *Ḥuqqat* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 59b–60a; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:2; *Zohar* 1:57a–b; 2:155b. The full verse in Psalms reads: *The human*, בל ילין (*bal yalin*), *does not* [or: *will not*] *abide* [literally: *spend the night*], *in glory; he is likened to beasts that perish*.

526. **What is the nature of this human being?...** On the phrase "our image," see Genesis 1:26: *God said, "Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness."* According to a midrashic tradition, the plurals in this verse imply that God was consulting with the angels.

On these two paragraphs, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 59b–60a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:23; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:3.

527. **he sinned and was sentenced...** Prompting the angels Uzza and Aza'el to criticize God for having created a human.

According to legend, as a result of their opposition to the creation of Adam and Eve, Uzza and Aza'el were cast down from heaven. They are the fallen angels who were attracted to *the daughters of men* (Genesis 6:2) and were

consequently punished by being bound in chains of iron in the Mountains of Darkness—from where they still manage to wreak havoc as masters of sorcery. See *Midrash Avkir*, 7 (cited in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 44); *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiva*, 175–76; above, pp. 24–25, n. 61.

The expression "was sentenced" renders נפק בדימוס (*nefaq be-dimos*), which actually means "he went out with a pardon." *Dimos* derives from Latin *dimis, dimissio*, "release, pardon." See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:1, recounting the first day of Adam's life hour by hour: "… in the ninth [hour] He commanded him [not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge]; in the tenth he transgressed His command; in the eleventh he was judged; in the twelfth יצא בדימוס (*yatsa be-dimos*), he went out with a pardon, from the presence of the blessed Holy One." See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:1.

In the *Zohar, dimos* conveys the sense of "judgment, verdict, sentence," by which Adam was expelled from the Garden. This misunderstanding (or playfulness) is based on the sequence in the midrashic passage: "in the tenth he transgressed His command; in the eleventh he was judged; in the twelfth *yatsa be-dimos*." See *Zohar* 2:55a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 37 (44).

528. **If you would be with them…** "Then you, too, would be seduced by sin." To test them, God casts Uzza and Aza'el down to earth, where they are soon attracted to *the daughters of men* (Genesis 6:2). See *Midrash Avkir*, 7 (cited in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 44).

529. **Now I return to your answer…** That is, "I return to answering your question."

Maybe Balaam was boasting falsely when he claimed to have attained a divine vision in a state of *falling and eyes uncovered*. But then how could God include such an untruth in the Torah?

The clause "I return" renders אהרדנא (*ahadarna*). See above, note 524. For the biblical context of *falling and eyes uncovered*, see above, note 519.

530. **Now I return to the original subject…** Of Uzza and Aza’el. The clause “I return” renders אהרדנא (*ahadarna*). See above, note 524.

531. ***He makes His angels spirits…*** The verse reads: עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט (*Oseh mal’akhav ruḥot, mesharetav esh lohet*), which is often understood as *He makes winds His messengers* [or: *His angels*], *flaming fire His ministers*. Here, drawing on a rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim’on reads the words according to their precise order: *He makes His angels spirits* [or: *winds*], etc. But if the *angels* are *spirits*, then how could the angels Uzza and Aza’el manifest in physical form and be attracted to *the daughters of men?*

Rabbi Shim’on explains that when Uzza and Aza’el were cast down from heaven, their celestial energy was cut off, so they lost their pristine radiance and then assumed physical form.

On the verse in Psalms, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 4; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlaḥ* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:22; 25:2; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:4; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 77; *Zohar* 1:40b (*Heikh*), 58a, 81a (*ST*), 101a, 144a; 2:10a, 98b, 173a–b, 229b; 3:9b, 126b, 152a, 234a; *ZḤ* 10a (*MhN*), 81b (*MhN, Rut*). On spiritual entities manifesting on earth in physical form, see also Naḥmanides on Genesis 18:1; *Zohar* 1:34a, 98b (*ST*); 2:197a, 231a; *ZḤ* 81a (*MhN, Rut*).

532. **The manna that descended for Israel…** This miraculous food derived from the flow of emanation, trickling like dew from its source in “the Ancient One” (the primordial manifestation of *Ein Sof* through *Keter*). The flow of emanation gradually reached *Shekhinah*, who is described as the Apple Orchard, filled with sefirotic trees. As the flow left the divine realm, it gradually materialized and turned into the manna discovered by the Israelites in the wilderness.

If the dew of emanation itself gradually materializes into manna, then certainly the fallen angels Uzza and Aza’el

must have changed from celestial into physical beings.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *The manna was like coriander seed and its color like the color of bdellium*. On the association of manna with dew, see Exodus 16:13–14; Numbers 11:9. Psalms 78:25 describes the manna as *bread of the mighty*, which may refer to food of the angels. See Septuagint, ad loc.; Wisdom of Solomon 16:20; BT *Yoma* 75b (in the name of Rabbi Akiva); Naḥmanides on Exodus 16:6; *Zohar* 2:61b, 101b, 156b; *ZḤ* 86d (*MhN*, *Rut*).

On emanation as dew, see Naḥmanides on Exodus 16:6; Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 54–56; *Zohar* 1:95b, 143b, 224b, 225b, 232a; 2:61b, 62b, 83a–b, 88a, 156b, 176b (*SdTs*), 177b (*SdTs*), 210a; 3:26a, 128b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 288a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 45a–b. On manna in the *Zohar*, see Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals*, 82–115.

The image of the apple orchard derives from a rabbinic interpretation of Genesis 27:27, a verse that describes how Isaac the patriarch smelled the fragrance of the garments worn by his son Jacob (which were actually Esau's garments) when Jacob sought Isaac's blessing: *He smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him and said, "See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH."* See BT *Ta'anit* 29b in the name of Rav: "*Like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH*.... Like the fragrance of a field of apple trees."

In Kabbalah the apple orchard symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is filled with apple trees, namely the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, whose respective colors all appear in the apple: the white pulp, the red skin, and the green stem (or leaves).

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:9; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 35–37; *Zohar* 1:36a, 85a–b, 122a, 128b, 139a, 142b–143b, 224b, 249b; 2:13a, 39a–b, 60b, 61b, 84b, 127b; 3:74a, 84a–b, 88a, 95a, 128b (*IR*), 133b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 143a (*IR*), 202b, 286b–287a, 288a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 365.

533. **He bound them in iron chains…** God imprisoned them in a remote region.

See above, note 527. On the Mountains of Darkness, see above, note 281. On the description here, see *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiva*, 175–76; Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch*, 162, 326, 332; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 175–76, nn. 125–26.

534. **they teach people witchcraft…** Although bound in chains, Uzza and Aza'el still manage to teach their dark arts to those who venture to the Mountains of Darkness.

In the verse from Numbers, the phrase הררי קדם (*harerei qedem*) means *the mountains of Qedem*—probably referring to the mountainous region of northeastern Syria. The phrase is sometimes rendered as *the mountains of the east*, since *qedem* can also mean "east." See *Zohar* 1:126a. In Deuteronomy 33:15, *harerei qedem* means *ancient mountains*, since *qedem* can also mean "primeval time."

Here Rabbi Shim'on interprets *qedem* based on a related meaning of the root קדם (*qdm*), "before, in front of." The fact that the Mountains of Darkness are called *harerei qedem*, "Mountains of Qedem," implies that darkness אקדים (*aqdim*), "precedes," light. In Genesis 1:2–3, darkness precedes the creation of light; and according to the *Zohar*, evil precedes good. See Farber-Ginat, "Qelippah Qodemet li-Fri"; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 46, 53–54.

According to various midrashic traditions, Laban was either the father or grandfather of Balaam. On this, and on Laban's powers of witchcraft (which he wielded against Jacob), see above, note 182.

535. **Balaam boasted of this place…** He bragged that in the Mountains of Darkness he had learned both wisdom and sorcery from Uzza and Aza'el. The wording *the sayings of God* implies that Balaam did not hear *the voice of God* directly, only *the sayings of God*, transmitted by the two fallen angels. Similarly, a person returning from a lecture on Torah might say that he had been "listening to the words

of the Holy King," recorded in the Written Torah and expounded via the Oral Torah.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Utterance of one who hears the sayings of El* [or: *God*] *and knows the knowledge of Elyon* (*the Most High*). *A vision of Shaddai he beholds, falling with eyes uncovered*.

536. ***And knows the knowledge of the Most High…*** According to a rabbinic tradition, Balaam knew how to determine the precise moment each day when God becomes angry. By cursing at that moment, he could effectively doom Israel.

See BT *Berakhot* 7a: "Does the blessed Holy One express wrath? Yes, for it has been taught: *God rages every day* (Psalms 7:12). How long is His rage? One moment. And how long is one moment? One fifty-eight-thousand-eight-hundred-and-eighty-eighth of an hour. This is a moment, and no creature can determine it precisely—except for the wicked Balaam, of whom is written *He knows the mind* [or: *knowledge*] *of the Most High* (Numbers 24:16). Now, even the mind of his animal [i.e., his donkey] he did not know, so how could he know *the mind of the Most High*? Well, this teaches that he knew how to determine that precise moment in which the blessed Holy One is angry." See above, note 180.

537. ***Who beholds a vision of Shaddai…*** According to the simple sense of the verse, the following phrase—וגלוי עינים נופל (*nofel u-glu'i einayim*), *falling with eyes uncovered* [literally: *falling and eyes uncovered*]—describes Balaam's ecstatic state. Here, however, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the two components of the phrase *falling and eyes uncovered* refer respectively to Uzza and Aza'el, who constitute the *vision of Shaddai* beheld by Balaam. Uzza's name, *falling*, refers to both his original fall from heaven and his subsequent fall into darkness.

See above, note 236. As indicated above (note 535), the full verse in Numbers reads: *Utterance of one who hears*

the sayings of God and knows the knowledge of the Most High. A vision of Shaddai he beholds, falling with eyes uncovered. Here the verse is quoted with the slightest difference (*who beholds a vision of Shaddai*), matching the wording in Numbers 24:4.

538. **Aza'el is *eyes uncovered*...** Because he accepted his punishment, unlike Uzza.

539. **there was no one left in the world...** Balaam was the only person who was still being instructed by Uzza and Aza'el in the Mountains of Darkness.

The wording of the verse in Numbers—*Balak, the king of Moab, did lead me from the mountains of Qedem*—now implies that Balak led Balaam "from the Mountains of Darkness." See above, note 534.

On the phrase מארץ בני קדם (*me-erets benei qedem*), *from the land of the people of Qedem* [or: *of the people of the east*], cf. Genesis 29:1; ארצה בני קדם (*artsah benei qedem*), *to the land of the Easterners* [or: *of the people of the east*; *of the people of Qedem*].

540. **the blessed Holy One settles only in a holy place...** So how could He possibly have revealed Himself to Balaam, the impure sorcerer?

The context in Deuteronomy (18:10–11) reads: *There shall not be found among you one who passes his son or his daughter through fire*, קוסם קסמים (*qosem qesamim*), *diviner of divinations, soothsayer, augur, sorcerer, one who casts a spell, or consults a ghost or familiar spirit, or inquires of the dead*. On Balaam as קוסם (*qosem*), "diviner, soothsayer, wizard," see above at note 522, quoting Joshua 13:22.

541. ***For YHVH your God walks about in the midst of your camp...*** The full verse reads: *For YHVH your God walks about in the midst of your camp, to save you and to deliver your enemies to you, and your camp shall be holy, so that He not see among you anything indecent and turn back from you*.

The wording *You shall be holy, for I, YHVH, am holy* includes elements from the Masoretic text of Leviticus 11:45 and 20:7. The former reads: *You shall be holy, for I am holy*. The latter reads: *You shall hallow yourselves and be* [or: *become*] *holy, for I am YHVH your God*. The wording *for I, YHVH, am holy* appears in a similar context in Leviticus 19:2; 20:26. See above, p. 286, n. 111.

Leviticus 18:24 reads in full: *Do not be defiled through all of these, for through all of these were defiled the nations that I am about to send away before you*. Leviticus 20:23 reads in full: *You shall not follow the statutes of the nation that I am driving out before you—for all these things they have done, and I loathed them*.

542. ***The jenny saw…*** The context in Numbers (22:23–25) reads: *The jenny saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed in the road* [or: *way*], *his sword unsheathed in his hand, and the jenny swerved from the road and went into the field, and Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road. But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path of* [or: *through*] *the vineyards, a fence on one side and a fence on the other. And the jenny saw the angel of YHVH and pressed herself against the wall, pressing Balaam's leg against the wall, and once more he struck her*.

According to the interpretation here, *in the way* refers to the sorcerous way that Balaam followed. The angel was blocking him from using such sorcery against Israel.

543. **why did the jenny see…** See above at note 518.

544. **he was intended for all…** For both Balaam and his donkey. The *angel of YHVH* sought to remove the burden of sorcery from the donkey through the power of Compassion (signified by the name *YHVH*).

On the jenny being loaded or burdened, see above at notes 513, 516. On the name *YHVH* as signifying Compassion, see above, p. 240, n. 21. On Balaam's rejecting "another" (i.e., divine) authority, see above at notes 507–10.

545. **If his words came from the side of lower crowns…** If Balaam was inspired by demonic forces, why does Scripture write: *Elohim, God, came to Balaam in the night and said to him, "If these men have come to call you, rise, go with them. But only the word that I speak to you shall you do"*?

546. **the angel returned to speak with him…** The *angel of YHVH*—who confronted Balaam and his donkey on the road—later returned to him, inspiring his words of blessing for Israel.

According to the simple sense of Numbers 22:20, *Elohim, God, came to Balaam in the night and said to him, "… But only the word that I speak to you shall you do."* But Rabbi Yitsḥak insists that the speaker was the angel (since angels are sometimes called *Elohim*). In fact, later in the chapter *the angel of YHVH* conveys the same message to Balaam: *Nevertheless, the word that I speak to you, it alone shall you speak*.

One might object by quoting Numbers 22:12—*Elohim said to Balaam*—where the subject is presumably God Himself. But Rabbi Yitsḥak quotes a tradition that the various references to *Elohim* in the Balaam story "all refer to an angel." The particular angel referred to here (*Elohim said to Balaam*) derives "from the side of harsh Judgment," to which the demonic forces are linked. This angel sought to prevent Balaam from contacting and utilizing any demonic powers against Israel, which is why he *came to Balaam* and *said to Balaam* not to do so.

On angels being called "by a supernal name," that is, *Elohim*, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:2: "Every Hebrew knew that the term *Elohim* is equivocal, designating the deity, the angels, and the rulers governing the cities." See above, notes 395, 495.

For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Numbers 22:35 reads in full: *The angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH said to*

Balaam, "Go with the men. Nevertheless, the word that I speak to you, it alone shall you speak." And Balaam went with Balak's chieftains.

Numbers 22:12 reads in full: *Elohim, God, said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for it is blessed."* Numbers 22:9 reads in full: *Elohim, God, came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"*

547. ***The jenny swerved from the way…*** According to Rabbi Yitsḥak, this means that Balaam's donkey turned aside from the demonic way that her master had forced her to follow. Balaam's *rod* signifies demonic powers that he imposed upon her.

On the jenny being loaded or burdened, see above at notes 513, 516, 544. Numbers 22:23 reads: *The jenny swerved from the road* [or: *from the way*]. For the full verse, see above, note 542. Numbers 22:27 reads in full: *The jenny saw the angel of YHVH, and she crouched down under Balaam; and Balaam's wrath flared and he struck the jenny with the rod*.

548. **he sought to leave the authority above…** After being told not to go with Balak's messengers. See above at notes 507–10.

549. ***But the angel of YHVH stood in the narrow path…*** For the biblical context, see above, note 542.

First, *the jenny swerved from the way*—from the sorcerous way of Balaam—*and went into the field*, that is, she followed a holy path issuing from *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as a *field* or apple orchard. See above, note 532.

550. ***to steer her back to the way…*** Back to his sorcerous way, diverting her from the way of *Shekhinah*. The verse reads: *And Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road* [or: *the way*].

551. ***he struck the jenny with the rod…*** See above, note 547.

552. **How carefully should we contemplate the words of Torah…** Rabbi Abba asks why the Torah needs to

tell us about an angel appearing to a donkey in some vineyard. Ah, but every detail here alludes to a mystery.

For other examples of challenges posed to the wording of Torah, see Vol. 8, p. 497, n. 21; below, note 577. On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13.

553. **From the aspect of Mother…** Rabbi Abba begins an elaborate description of the coronation of *Shekhinah* and Her union with *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*), which eventually returns to the verse in Numbers.

The flashing colors of *Shekhinah*'s crown create "twelve engraved boundaries," corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. These twelve join "twelve others," namely twelve similar potencies surrounding *Tif'eret*.

The image of "twelve תחומין (*teḥumin*), boundaries [or: limits, dominions]" recalls the twelve גבולי אלכסון (*gevulei alakhson*), "diagonal borders" (edges of a cube), mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 5:1. See above, note 197. For various interpretations of this entire passage, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

554. ***towers of perfumes…*** That is, filled with perfumes or with *all the merchant's powders*.

Song of Songs 5:13 reads in full: *His cheeks are like a bed of spices* [or: *balsam*], מגדלות מרקחים (*migdelot merqaḥim*), *towers of perfumes* [or: *of herbal spices*]. *His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh*.

Song of Songs 3:6 reads in full: *Who is this rising from the desert like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, all sorts of merchant's powders* [or: *with all the merchant's powders*]. The second half of the verse can also be rendered: *more fragrant with myrrh and frankincense than all the merchant's powders*.

555. **This crown scintillates with leaps of Ophir…** Ophir, somewhere to the south of the land of Israel by the shore of the Red Sea, is identified in the Bible as a source of gold—so much so that in biblical poetry the name "Ophir"

alone can mean “fine gold.” Here, “leaps” may refer to the sparkling flashes of *Shekhinah*’s golden crown, whose splendor enhances the glory of *Shekhinah*’s spouse, King *Tif’eret* (or *Ze’eir Anpin*). Cf. *ZḤ* 52c.

The verse in Isaiah reads: אוקיר אנוש מפז (*oqir enosh mi-paz*), *I will make people scarcer than pure gold*, ואדם מכתם אופיר (*ve-adam mi-ketem ophir*), *and a human than gold of Ophir*. This implies that nearly everyone will be destroyed. Here, Rabbi Abba construes the verse as: *I will make people precious with pure gold, and a human with gold of Ophir*. The term *adam, human*, alludes to *Tif’eret* (or *Ze’eir Anpin*), who is made precious and glorious by the splendor of *Shekhinah*’s crown. On the verse in Isaiah, cf. *Zohar* 1:107b.

556. **bells of gold…** The image of golden bells and a pomegranate derives from the description of Aaron’s priestly robe in Exodus 28:33–35: *You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and crimson, on its hem all around, and bells of gold within them all around. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the hem of the robe all around. It shall be upon Aaron when he serves, so that its sound is heard when he comes into the sanctuary before YHVH and when he goes out, that he shall not die*.

Although in the biblical passage the bells and pomegranates obviously alternate all the way around the hem of Aaron’s robe, here the *Zohar* focuses on one central pomegranate, containing “a thousand bells.” These bells (or seeds) flash red and white, symbolizing respectively *Gevurah* and *Ḥesed*.

557. **Three hundred and twenty-five bells…** On each side of the pomegranate. The slices are equivalent to the four segments mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

The word “slice” renders פלכייא (*pilkheya*), a neologism modeled on Hebrew פלח (*pelaḥ*), “slice,” as in the verse from Song of Songs: כפלח הרמון (*Ke-phelaḥ ha-rimmon*), *Like a slice of pomegranate, your cheek behind your veil*.

Scholem suggests an association with Arabic *phalaka*, "wheel." Cf. *Zohar* 3:99a (*Piq*); *Ma'arikh*, s.v. *plq*; *Nitsotsei Zohar* on *Zohar* 3:270b, n. 2. The cognate Hebrew word פלך (*pelekh*) means "spindle."

On the number 325, see *Zohar* 2:53b; 3:48b, 132b (*IR*); Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 222. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Like a scarlet thread, your lips, and your tongue, lovely.* כפלח הרמון (*Ke-phelaḥ ha-rimmon*), *Like a slice of pomegranate, your cheek* [or: *your temple*] *behind your veil*.

558. **Four wheels on the slices...** To transport the crown. For various interpretations of "the supernal slice," see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

559. **all asking one another...** The angels cannot determine the exact location of the flying crown.

In the context in Ezekiel, the declaration *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His* [or: *its*] *place!* is spoken by the angels. According to a rabbinic interpretation, this demonstrates that even the angels cannot determine the exact location of God (or of the Divine Glory). See BT *Ḥagigah* 13b: "Look at what is written: *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His place!*—implying that no one knows His place." See above, p. 28, n. 72.

560. **When the King couples with *Matronita*...** When *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) unites with *Shekhinah*, the crown ascends and settles on Her head. Then "a lofty crown descends" for Her partner, prepared by *Binah*, Supernal Mother.

The phrase "calyx and blossom" derives from the biblical description of the lampstand in the Tabernacle. See Exodus 25:33, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; above, p. 87, n. 98.

The number six corresponds to the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*; their core is *Tif'eret*. The association of *Binah* with the number fifty (and specifically with fifty gates) derives from a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*),

understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

The number 613, of course, suggests the 613 commandments of the Torah. On *Shekhinah*'s title *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

561. **One thousand six hundred towers on every side…** Of the "lofty crown." The "arranged rows" imbibe from the nourishment of *Binah*, Supernal Mother.

The oil symbolizes the flow of emanation, which proceeds from the highest realms to the head of *Ze'eir Anpin* (or *Tif'eret*).

The context in Psalms (133:2–3) reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes. Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life*. See *Zohar* 2:87b; 3:7b–8a, 34a, 39a, 88b, 132b (*IR*), 295b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 42b; Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 21:19. On the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*, see below, p. 784, n. 51.

562. ***O daughters of Zion…*** The verse now alludes to *Binah* crowning King *Tif'eret* on the day when He weds *Shekhinah*. The people of Israel participate in the joy of the divine couple and, in fact, join "with them."

On the verse in Song of Songs, see M *Ta'anit* 4:8; *Sifra, Millu'im* (*Shemini*) 1:15, 44c; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 33; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:29b, 218a, 246a, 248b; 2:22a, 58a, 84a, 100b, 134a; 3:4b, 34b, 61b, 77b, 95a, 98a, 102b, 148b.

563. **blessings issuing from them…** From the divine couple. Israel obtains all of the blessings and provides some for other nations to be nourished.

See *Zohar* 3:103b (*Piq*); and the following note. Cf. Judah Halevi's depiction of Israel and the nations as

respectively the heart and the limbs of the body. See his *Kuzari* 2:35–44; *Zohar* 3:221b.

564. **Between the sides of the portions…** The seventy heavenly princes appointed over the nations of the world are sustained from above by the drippings (or residue) of divine emanation. “Between the sides” of their portions, a narrow channel conveys some of this residue to the princes’ earthly nations. The drippings issue from *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by “the Holy Land.”

See BT *Ta’anit* 10a: “The land of Israel drinks water directly from the rain, while the rest of the world drinks מתמצית (*mi-tamtsit*), of the drippings [Munich MS: of the land of Israel].” The manuscript reading is reflected here in the *Zohar*: “and so the whole world drinks *mi-tamtsit*, from the drippings of, the land of Israel.” The word תמצית (*tamtsit*) means literally “that which is squeezed out,” thus: “drippings, juice, residue, remnant, leftovers.”

See Naḥmanides on Deuteronomy 11:10–12; *Zohar* 1:84b, 108b; 2:22b, 152b, 209a–b; 3:265b; *ZḤ* 9d (*MhN*), 61b (*MhN, ShS*), 81a, 87d (both *MhN, Rut*). On the seventy heavenly princes ruling the seventy nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. On this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

565. **Who is the land of Israel?…** *Shekhinah*, who nourishes both the heavenly prince “above” and their respective nations “below” with the drippings. Even the demonic forces (“crowns”) are sustained by this.

Rabbi Abba identifies the narrow path (or channel) conveying the drippings with *the narrow path of the vineyards* mentioned in Numbers. *The vineyards* represent the nations and/or their heavenly princes.

The context in (Numbers 22:23–24) reads: *The jenny saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of YHVH stationed in the road, his sword unsheathed in his hand, and the jenny swerved from the road and went into the field, and Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road. But the angel of*

YHVH stood in the narrow path of [or: *through*] *the vineyards, a fence on one side and a fence on the other*.

566. **When that angel saw…** He saw that Balaam was steering his donkey "to that path"—namely to the path conveying the drippings from above to the heavenly princes and their nations, as well as to demonic forces. Thereby Balaam sought to be empowered in order to curse Israel, making them vulnerable to hostile nations. So the angel immediately *stood in the narrow path of the vineyards*, blocking it.

This is the verse mentioned by Rabbi Abba above at notes 552–53. The preceding verse reads: *And Balaam struck the jenny to steer her back to the road* [or: *the way*]. See above, note 550.

567. ***They made me keeper of the vineyards…*** The full verse reads: *Do not stare at me for being blackish, for the sun has glared upon me. My mother's sons were mean to me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have not kept*.

Here the verse is spoken by *Shekhinah*, who—before going into exile—had protected and cultivated Israel (*my own vineyard*), while the other nations of the world had been nourished from the drippings. But now, in exile Herself, *Shekhinah* "keeps" other nations (*the vineyards*), and Israel is nourished from the remnants. See *Zohar* 2:266a (*Heikh*); 3:45b, 119b. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, note 318.

568. ***A fence on one side and a fence on the other…*** Rabbi Abba asks how the angel could block the heavenly path, which had always been open to nourish the seventy princes and their nations and the demonic forces. He explains that the angel was helped by the blessed Holy One and *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who are each symbolized by one of the two fences.

For the full verse, see above, note 565. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

569. **Torah assisted him...** The power of the Torah assisted the angel. Rabbi Yehudah demonstrates this by verbal analogy: the phrase *on one side and on the other* appears both here (describing the fences) and in Exodus, describing the two tablets engraved with the essence of Torah.

See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:14. The full verse in Exodus reads: *Moses turned and came down from the mountain, with the two tablets of the Covenant in his hand, tablets written on both their sides, on one side and on the other they were written*.

570. ***pressed herself against*** הקיר **(*ha-qir*), *the wall*...** Rabbi Yehudah associates הקיר (*ha-qir*), *the wall*, with the ambiguous expression in Isaiah: מקרקר קיר (*Meqarqar qir*), which may mean *Kir shrieked*. Here, this alludes to *Shekhinah*, crying over the exile of Her children.

The identification of *Qir* with *Shekhinah* is based on the Greek term *kyrios*, "lord." She is the "patron" ruling over Israel and protecting them. By *pressing Balaam's leg against the wall*, the jenny indicated to Balaam that *Shekhinah* was present and that she (the jenny) would not help Balaam at all. Then Balaam *struck her* again "on this side"—apparently referring to the side of *the narrow path of the vineyards* (or the left side)—to force her to assist him. See above, notes 565–66; *Or Yaqar*.

On *qir* and *kyrios*, see *Zohar* 1:228b. Cf. 2:22b (Vol. 4, p. 75, n. 21), 133a; 3:260b. For rabbinic knowledge of the Greek term *kyrios*, see BT *Eruvin* 53b, *Avodah Zarah* 11b, *Ḥullin* 139b.

On the verse in Isaiah as alluding to *Shekhinah* weeping over Her children, see *Zohar* 1:228b. The full verse reads: *For my Lord, God of Hosts, had a day of tumult and din and confusion—in the Valley of Vision* מקרקר קיר (*meqarqar qir*), *Kir shouted* [or: *shouting a shout*; *battering down a wall*], *and Shoa on the hill*.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *And the jenny saw the angel* [or: *messenger*] *of* YHVH *and pressed herself against the wall, pressing Balaam's leg against the wall, and once more he struck her.*

571. ***The angel of* YHVH *once more crossed over…*** Blocking the way and blocking any assistance to the jenny from demonic forces.

The context in Numbers (22:26–31) reads: *The angel* [or: *messenger*] *of* YHVH *once more crossed over, standing in a narrow place where there was no room to turn right or left. The jenny saw the angel of* YHVH*, and she crouched down under Balaam; and Balaam's wrath flared and he struck the jenny with the rod. And* YHVH *opened the jenny's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you've struck me these three times?" Balaam said to the jenny, "Because you have toyed with* [or: *made a mockery of*; *played a dirty trick on; abused; tormented*] *me. If only I had a sword in my hand! For I would kill you right now* [or: *If I had a sword in my hand, by now I would have killed you!*]*." The jenny said to Balaam, "Am I not your jenny upon whom you have ridden your whole life until this day? Have I ever had the habit of doing like this to you?" He said, "No." And* YHVH *unveiled* [or: *uncovered*] *Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of* YHVH *stationed in the way, his sword unsheathed in his hand, and he knelt and prostrated himself on his face*.

572. **one of those things created on the eve of Sabbath…** According to M *Avot* 5:6, at the end of the six days of Creation ten supernatural phenomena "were created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight," including "the mouth of the earth" (that engulfed Korah and his rebellious faction) and "the mouth of the donkey" (that spoke to Balaam). See above, note 421. For the context of the verse in Numbers, see the preceding note.

573. **What was so great…** If God actually *opened the jenny's mouth*, one would expect that the words she uttered

would have deep significance and great impact, which does not seem to be the case. For the jenny's words, see above, note 571.

574. **That those chieftains…** The chieftains sent by King Balak laughed mockingly at Balaam, who was supposedly a great sorcerer—and yet he could not see what his own donkey saw, and he debated with her.

575. **Balaam would not have abandoned that plan of his…** To curse Israel.

576. **Rabbi Abba raised a contradiction…** In describing the mouth of the earth that engulfed Korah and his faction, Scripture states *The earth opened her mouth*, whereas concerning Balaam's jenny the verse reads *YHVH opened the jenny's mouth*. Why isn't it similarly written *YHVH opened the earth's mouth*? Rabbi Abba explains that Moses commanded the earth to open her mouth, so in that case it was not fitting for God to intervene. Regarding Balaam's jenny, however, no one had issued a decree, and God acted directly.

For the contrasting notion that God can or does fulfill the decrees of the righteous, see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16, p. 315: "The righteous decree, and the blessed Holy One fulfills." Cf. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:4: "When the righteous decree, the blessed Holy One fulfills their words." See also BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b, where Rabbi Abbahu quotes God as saying: "I rule over humanity. Who rules over Me? The righteous one. For I issue a decree and he abolishes it." See above, p. 221, n. 101.

The context in Numbers (16:29–33) records Moses' words to the Israelites about the fate of Korah and his faction: "*If like the death of all human beings these die, and if the fate of all human beings befalls them, then it is not YHVH who has sent me. But if YHVH creates something new, and the ground opens its* [or: *her*] *mouth wide and swallows them and all of theirs and they go down alive to Sheol, you will know that these people have rejected YHVH.*" *And it*

happened, just as he finished speaking all these words, the ground beneath them split apart, and the earth opened its [or: *her*] *mouth and swallowed them and their households and every human being who belonged to Korah and all the possessions. And they went down, they and all that was theirs, alive to Sheol, and the earth covered them, and they vanished from the midst of the assembly.*

577. **it seems that they are unnecessary…** Since God *opened the jenny's mouth*, one would expect her to utter sublime words of wisdom, not mundane remarks such as: *What have I done to you, that you've struck me these three times*?

The expression "as the Companions have educed" refers to a Talmudic interpretation of the jenny's words. See BT *Avodah Zarah* 4b (which opens with a verse in which Balaam praises himself): "*He knows the mind* [or: *knowledge*] *of the Most High* (Numbers 24:16). Now, even the mind of his animal he did not know, so how could he possibly know *the mind of the Most High*? What is meant by 'the mind of his animal he did not know'? Well, when [King Balak's chieftains] saw [Balaam] riding on his jenny, they said to him, 'Why aren't you riding a horse?' He replied, 'I put it out to graze in the moist meadow.' But she [i.e., the jenny] said to him, '*Am I not your jenny*?' He said to her, 'Just for carrying burdens.' She said to him, '*Upon whom you have ridden*.' He said to her, 'Just occasionally.' She said to him, '*Your whole life until this day*. Furthermore, I give you rides by day and marital relations by night!' It is written here: הֶהָסְכֵּן הִסְכַּנְתִּי (*ha-hasken hiskanti*), *Have I ever had the habit*, [*of doing like this to you*?], and it is written there: *and become his* סֹכֶנֶת (*sokhenet*), *familiar* (1 Kings 1:2)."

The context in 1 Kings (1:1–2) reads: *King David had grown old, advanced in years, and they covered him with bedclothes, but he was not warm. His servants said to him, "Let them seek out for my lord the king a young virgin, that she may wait upon the king and become his* סֹכֶנֶת (*sokhenet*),

familiar [or: *nurse, companion, attendant*], *and lie in your lap, and my lord the king will be warm.*”

Rabbi Yehudah’s point here is that if the jenny intended to prove to Balak’s chieftains that she (and not a horse) was Balaam’s regular beast of burden, then she should have begun by asking *Am I not your jenny?* But, instead, she began by asking *What have I done to you, that you’ve struck me these three times?*

On the mundane nature of the jenny’s words, see above at note 573. On seemingly unnecessary words of Torah, see BT *Ḥullin* 60b, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish, “Many verses seem fit to be burned, yet precisely these are essential components of Torah.” Cf. Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37–38; *Zohar* 1:201a; 2:217b, 236a; 3:149b. See above, note 552.

On the passage in BT *Avodah Zarah*, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 22:20; BT *Sanhedrin* 105b; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 9. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 571.

578. **Surely through these words…** Actually, this passage shows Balaam’s ignorance, since he could not perceive what his jenny perceived. (Alternatively, the lack of substance in her words demonstrates Balaam’s ignorance, since if he were wise, then God could have conveyed wisdom to him through the jenny’s mouth.) Furthermore (as explained below), the jenny’s words indicate that she behaved like other animals—only as she was conducted—and had no free will. Finally, from the jenny’s lack of wisdom we learn about the limits of the animal mind.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

579. **Balaam could not comprehend…** See the passage from BT *Avodah Zarah* 4b (quoted above, note 577): “Now, even the mind of his animal he did not know, so how could he possibly know *the mind of the Most High?*”

On Balaam’s not comprehending the jenny’s mind, see Rashi on BT *Sanhedrin* 105b, s.v. *da’at behemto*; Samuel Edels

(Maharsha), *Ḥiddushei Aggadot, Avodah Zarah* 4b, s.v. *da'at behemto*; Steinsaltz, *Avodah Zarah* 4b, *iyyunim*, s.v. *da'at behemto*.

580. ***What have I done to you?...*** She behaved like other animals—as she was conducted—and had no free will. See above at note 578.

Although the jenny was sunk in the depths of sorcery, this was not her choice; rather, she was under the control of Balaam, who had loaded her with sorceries. See above at notes 513, 515–16.

581. ***Because you have toyed with me...*** Balaam should have said nothing in response to the jenny, but instead he matched her stupidity by answering irascibly as though he were accustomed to debating with his beast. Then King Balak's chieftains broke out in laughter at Balaam.

See *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 7, p. 135; *Leqaḥ Tov, Midrash ha-Gadol*, and Rashi on Numbers 22:29. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 13; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:14.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balaam said to the jenny, "Because* התעללת (*hit'allalt*), *you have toyed with* [or: *made a mockery of*; *played a dirty trick on*; *abused*; *tormented*], *me. If only I had a sword in my hand! For I would kill you right now* [or: *If I had a sword in my hand, by now I would have killed you!*]." See Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, ad loc.

582. **with another spirit...** A spirit of wisdom.

583. **Balak was more skilled in sorcery...** But Balaam knew how to determine the precise moment each day when God becomes angry. By cursing at that moment, he could effectively doom his target. So King Balak and Balaam needed one another in order to successfully curse Israel.

See BT *Berakhot* 7a (quoted above, note 536). The parable referred to here appears in several midrashic sources. See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 11: "Balak was a greater

master of divination and of sorcery than Balaam, for the latter trailed along after him like a blind man. A parable. To what can the two of them be compared? To a person who holds a knife in his hand but does not know the joints [of the limbs of the animal about to be slaughtered, i.e., the exact spot in the neck where the ritual cut should be made], while his companion knows where the joints are but has no knife. Similarly, Balak divined the places in which Israel would fall, as is said: *He brought him up to Bamoth-Baal* (Numbers 22:41) [—this is Baal-peor—], for he saw that Israel would fall there."

In the midrashic account, the place name *Bamoth-Baal* (Cult Sites of Baal) is identified with the Moabite god Baal-peor, that is, with the infamous event at Israel's last stop on their trek through the desert, where many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped Baal-peor. As a result, twenty-four thousand Israelites died in a plague, in addition to those who were slain by the Israelite officers.

On King Balak's being a greater sorcerer than Balaam, see above, note 180. On the passage in *Tanḥuma*, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:18. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi* and Rashi, Numbers 22:41. The bracketed clause "this is Baal-peor" (in the second paragraph of this note) is borrowed from *Tanḥuma* (Buber).

584. **through his sorcery…** King Balak discovered Israel's vulnerability, their future idolatrous worship. Cf. the passage from *Tanḥuma* in the preceding note.

The biblical quotation here does not appear as such. See 2 Kings 17:15–16; cf. *Tosafot, Shabbat* 128a, s.v. *ve-natan*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. See also Judges 33; 1 Kings 18:18; Jeremiah 9:13. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

585. ***And he saw from there the edge of the people…*** Rabbi Yitsḥak apparently associates קצה (*qetseh*),

the edge of, with קצין (*qatsin*), “captain.” Alternatively, he interprets *the edge* as “the leading edge.” Balaam foresaw the notables of Israel worshiping Baal, including King Ahab.

The passage in Kings describes the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The latter are associated here with “the notables of the people.” (According to 1 Kings 18:19, these idolatrous prophets ate at Queen Jezebel’s table.)

1 Kings 18:21 reads in full: *Elijah ap*proached all the people and said, “How long will you keep hopping between the two branches [or: *opinions, crevices*]? *If YHVH is God, go follow him, and if Baal, follow him*.” *And the people answered him not a word*. Elijah then arranges a contest, challenging the prophets of Baal to choose one of two bulls, cut it up, place it on the altar, and call upon Baal to respond with sacrificial fire. As the biblical passage continues (1 Kings 18:25–26): *Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls for yourselves and go first, for you are the majority, and invoke the name of your god, but set no fire.” They took the bull that he had given them, and they prepared it and invoked Baal by name from morning to noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice and no one responding, and they hopped about on the altar that he had made*.

The context in Numbers (23:1–2) reads: *Balaam said to Balak, “Build me here seven* מזבחת (*mizbeḥot*), *altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams.” Balak did as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar*.

Here Rabbi Yitsḥak indicates that in the Masoretic text the word מזבחת (*mizbeḥot*), *altars*, is spelled without the letter ו (*vav*). This “deficient” spelling apparently alludes to the lack of holiness in these altars, based on the evil intentions of Balaam and Balak.

586. **Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Yehudah…** Rabbi Yose followed the midrashic tradition that the seven altars

correspond to the altars built by seven righteous heroes: Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. According to Rabbi Yehudah, Balaam realized that Israel is linked with the seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*.

On the midrashic interpretation of the seven altars, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 16; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:18. Cf. Rashi on Numbers 23:4.

587. **This may be compared to a man…** This man is protected by a friend of his father's. When another man comes and wants to meddle with him, that second man sends a gift (or bribe) to the friend. But the friend is immediately suspicious and rejects the bribe.

588. **that supernal Friend of theirs…** God, who quickly rejects Balaam's sacrificial offerings. The father in the parable represents Israel's ancestors, from whom the nation "inherited" its relationship with God.

On Balaam offering a gift to God, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 16; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:18. On the image of the dogs, cf. below, note 628. On the verse in Proverbs, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 6:1; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 5; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:3; *Zohar* 2:55b; 3:77b.

589. ויקר אלהים (***Va-yiqqar Elohim***), ***God happened upon…*** Rabbi Shim'on associates ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*, with קרי (*qeri*), "mishap, pollution, nocturnal emission." The wording *Va-yiqqar Elohim, God happened upon, Balaam* now implies that God rejected Balaam's offerings and consigned them to the impure forces of pollution.

On *va-yiqqar* as signifying impurity, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 52:5; 74:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlaḥ* 24; Rashi on Numbers 23:4; *Zohar* 2:195a; *ZḤ 85d* (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. Vol. 7, p. 523, n. 532. On the contrast between *va-yiqqar* (here in Numbers, pertaining to Balaam) and ויקרא (*Va-yiqra*), *He called, to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1), see Vol. 7, pp. 7–8, n. 23.

The verse in Numbers reads in full: ויקר אלהים (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon* [or: *chanced to appear to; allowed Himself to be encountered by*] *Balaam, and he said to Him, "The seven altars I have arrayed, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar."*

590. ***In the face of*** **קרתו (*qarato*), *His cold*...** Rabbi Abba associates ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*, with קרתו (*qarato*), *His cold*, implying that God cast a cold eye on Balaam and his malicious plan.

For various interpretations of קריר גרמיה (*qareir garmeih*), literally, "He chilled Himself," see Vital; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Psalms reads: *He flings His ice like breadcrumbs. In the face of His cold who can stand?*

591. **that [*Elohim*] was aroused upon him from the impure side** As above (at note 589), the word ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*, suggests קרי (*qeri*), "mishap, pollution." Now, apparently, Rabbi Abba implies that *Elohim* refers not to God but to a power of harsh Judgment from the left, "impure side." See above, note 546.

592. **Balaam thought that by that gift he could enter...** By offering sacrifices, Balaam thought he could enter (or influence) the upper realms and effect harm upon Israel.

The word ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*, now suggests to Rabbi El'azar a similar-sounding Aramaic neologism: אעקר (*a'qar*), which can mean "eradicated" or "detached." The full verse in Proverbs reads: *An eye that mocks a father and scorns obedience to a mother—the ravens of the brook will peck it out* [or: *gouge it out*], *and the eagle's young will devour it*.

593. **you will not find...** Formulas of direct revelation such as *YHVH said to Balaam*. According to Rabbi Shim'on, the wording *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth* implies that God controlled Balaam, allowing him to speak only as He wished.

On Rabbi Shim'on's interpretation of *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth*, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 13; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20; the fragment from *Yelammedenu* in *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *kalinas*. Cf. the fragment from *Yelammedenu* in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 765; BT *Sanhedrin* 105b; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 16; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:18; Rashi on Numbers 23:16.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth, and He said, "Return to Balak and thus shall you speak."*

594. **do you think that it depends on you?...** Balaam can cause neither blessing nor curse. When he opens his mouth to speak, *Shekhinah*—known as כה (*koh*), "thus, here"—will utter the prophetic words. Rabbi Shim'on construes וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak*, as *and Koh* [namely *Shekhinah*] *shall speak*.

On the first part of the paragraph, see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:10; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:22; Rashi on Numbers 22:12. On the interpretation of *ve-khoh tedabber*, see above, note 388. On *Shekhinah* as *Koh*, see also above, note 148.

595. **Once he came to Balak...** When Balaam came to King Balak, and the latter eventually heard all the blessings for Israel coming out of Balaam's mouth, he accused Balaam, not realizing that Balaam was just the mouthpiece for *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balak said, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and instead you have offered blessings* [or: *and look, you have surely offered blessings; and look, you have done nothing but bless*]."

596. **in order to restrain this *Koh*...** To restrain *Shekhinah*. Then Balaam will "uproot Her from those words," thereby nullifying the blessings.

597. **התיצב כה (*Hityatsev koh*)...** The simple sense of the clause (spoken by Balaam to King Balak) is *Station yourself*

here. But Rabbi Shim'on construes it as *Stabilize Koh*—that is, "By your offerings and your sorcery, restrain *Shekhinah* (who is known as *Koh, here*)."

As for the conclusion of the verse—*and I myself* אקרה כה (*iqqareh koh*), *may be happened upon yonder*—Rabbi Shim'on reads this as "*and I myself* אעקר (*e'eqor*), *will uproot, Shekhinah* (who is known as *Koh, yonder*)" from those words, thereby nullifying them. See above, note 148.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *He said to Balak*, "כה התיצב (*Hityatsev koh*), *Station yourself here, by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I myself may be happened upon* [or: *and I myself will be encountered*; *and I myself will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*].

598. **What is written afterward?...** The word ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *happened upon*, suggests a similar-sounding Aramaic neologism: אעקר (*a'qar*), "uprooted, eradicated." See above, note 592.

The following verse concludes: וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak*—which Rabbi Shim'on construes as *and Koh* [namely *Shekhinah*] *shall speak*. See above, note 594.

The full verse in Numbers actually reads: ויקר יהוה (*Va-yiqqar YHVH*), *YHVH happened upon, Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus shall you speak."* The wording quoted here—*Va-yiqqar Elohim, God happened upon, Balaam*—appears in Numbers 23:4.

599. **At first it is not written...** Earlier in the chapter (Numbers 23:3), Balaam said to King Balak, התיצב (*Hityatsev*), *Station yourself, by your ascent offering*. Once he realized that *Shekhinah* was uttering the blessings, he mentioned Her by saying: התיצב כה (*Hityatsev koh*), *Station yourself here*—which Rabbi Shim'on construes as *Stabilize Koh*, that is, "By your offerings and your sorcery, restrain *Shekhinah* (who is known as *Koh, here*)."

The conclusion of Numbers 23:15—*and I myself* אקרה כה (*iqqareh koh*), *may be happened upon yonder*—now implies "*and I myself* אעקר (*e'eqor*), *will uproot, Shekhinah* (who is known as *Koh, yonder*)." See above, note 597.

Numbers 23:3 reads in full: *Balaam said to Balak, "Station yourself by your ascent offering, while I move about. Perhaps YHVH will happen upon me* [or: *will chance upon me; will allow Himself to be encountered by me*] *and will show me something that I may tell you." And he went off silently.*

600. ***Go,* ארה (*arah*), *curse*...** Rabbi Yose associates the verb *arah, curse*, with the similar-sounding אורה (*oreh*), *I will shoot* (or *cast*). Israel's rung is *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *He took up* [or: *raised*] *his verse and he said, "From Aram did Balak lead me, the king of Moab, from the mountains of Qedem: 'Go, curse me Jacob, and go, doom Israel.'"* The full verse in Samuel (spoken by Saul's son Jonathan to David) reads: *As for me, I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were aiming at a target.*

601. ***And go,* זועמה (*zo'amah*), *doom, Israel*...** Israel alludes to *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), who is known as Israel the Elder.

In midrashic literature the title "Israel the Elder" refers to Israel the patriarch (Jacob), as opposed to the people Israel. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:11; *Zohar* 1:233a; 2:4a, 43a (*Piq*), 216a; 2:160b; 3:119b, 126a, 241a, 262b–263a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 42–43 (51). In the *Zohar* the verse in Psalms is often applied to *Shekhinah*. See above, p. 173, n. 19.

602. ***When* מראש צורים (*me-rosh tsurim*), *from the cliff tops*...** The צורים (*tsurim*), *cliffs*, represent the patriarchs, based on the context in Isaiah (51:1–2), which reads: *Listen to Me, you who pursue justice, you who seek YHVH: Look to* צור (*tsur*), *the rock, from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your*

father and to Sarah who bore you. For he was one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

The *hills* represent the matriarchs. Protected by both sets of ancestors, "from this side and from that," Israel is invulnerable to cursing.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 23:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3, pp. 35–36; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 19; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:19; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 12, 49a; Rashi on Numbers 23:9. Cf. *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Beshallaḥ*) 1; above, note 479; and Vol. 5, p. 109, n. 311.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *When from the cliff tops I see him* [or: *them*], *and from hills I gaze upon him—look, a people that dwells alone* [or: *apart*], *among nations it is not reckoned*. On this verse, see Levine, *Numbers*, 2:173–75.

603. **Who can prevail over Israel?...** After all, they are linked to the Divine Mother, *Binah*, pictured as ריש֣א (*reisha*), "the head," from which issue all the formidable powers of judgment, pictured as צורים (*tsurim*), *cliffs*. These various גבורן (*gevuran*), "powers," are linked with *Gevurah* on the left, who emanates from *Binah*.

604. **other camps...** Of angels.

605. **other crowns...** Other *sefirot*, presumably from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*.

606. ***Look, a people that dwells alone...*** According to Rabbi Abba, this implies that Israel has no connection with alien or demonic forces, based on the verse in Deuteronomy, in which *alone* is parallel to *no alien god by His side*. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 602.

607. ***Who has counted the dust of Jacob?...*** This verse has already been discussed and interpreted, but Rabbi Yose offers a new perspective. *Jacob* and *Israel* allude respectively to the rungs of *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* (whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, "Beauty of Israel"). As the third

patriarch climbed the sefirotic ladder, he moved from the rung of *Shekhinah* (where his name was still Jacob) to the higher rung of *Tif'eret*, upon which he attained the name Israel. "Although all is one"—since Jacob and Israel are obviously the same person—the sefirotic significance of each name is distinct.

The name יעקב (*Ya'aqov*), *Jacob*, is associated with *Shekhinah* perhaps because She is the עקב (*aqev*), *heel*, i.e., the end of the flow of emanation. On the significance of the two names Jacob and Israel, see *Zohar* 1:145b, 147b–148b (*ST*), 174a, 176a, 177b, 210b–211a.

The full verse in Numbers (spoken by Balaam) reads: *Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered* רבע (*rova*), *the dust-cloud* [or: *seed, quarterland*, (*even*) *a fourth*] *of, Israel? May my soul die the death of the upright, and may my end* [or: *fate*] *be like his*. See above, note 487.

608. **Who is *dust*?...** Both *dust* and *sword* allude to *Shekhinah*. She is the source of all life, including the first human being, who was formed *dust from the earth*. As the divine *sword*, She executes judgment upon the wicked. Countless forces of judgment issue from this divine *dust*.

The verse in Isaiah 41 refers to God's empowerment of Cyrus, king of Persia: *He delivers nations to him and lets him subjugate kings*. יתן כעפר חרבו (*Yitten ke-afar ḥarbo*), *He makes their swords* [literally: *his sword*] *like dust* [or: *His sword makes them as dust, He turns them to dust with his sword*], כקש נדף קשתו (*ke-qash niddaf qashto*), *their* [literally: *his*] *bows like windblown stubble* [or: *to windblown stubble with his bow*]. Here, this verse implies the identity of *sword* and *dust* (the two names of *Shekhinah*): *He makes his sword like dust*.

On *Shekhinah* as dust, see *Zohar* 1:49a, 170a, 249b–250a; 2:23b–24b; 3:34b, 125a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344–45; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 171; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 57–58, 62 (70–71, 77–78).

The full verse in Isaiah 34 reads: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom*. In the *Zohar*, this divine sword is often identified as *Shekhinah*.

The expression "fiery embers" renders טפשין (*tifsin*). The Zoharic neologism *tifsa* sometimes means "glowing ember, burning coal." See *Zohar* 1:218a, 242a; 3:111a, 114b; *Derekh Emet*; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 178–80, s.v. *tifsa*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David* , s.v. *tifsa*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being*.

609. ***Or numbered* רובע (*rova*), *a fourth of, Israel…*** As mentioned above (note 607), one possible meaning of the term רובע (*rova*) in this verse is *a fourth of*. Here Rabbi Shim'on interprets this as referring to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the fourth (and last) letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*): ה (*he*). The name *Israel* alludes to *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), who is often represented by the full name *YHVH*.

The concluding clause ("and it is one matter") means that both halves of the verse in Numbers refer to the same *sefirah*: *Shekhinah*.

610. ***Rova of Israel…*** Now *rova* suggests the Aramaic word רביע (*revi'a*), "lying," which is employed by *Targum Onqelos* in rendering Exodus 23:5: *If you see your enemy's donkey* רבץ (*rovets*), *sprawling* [or: *lying, crouching*] *under its load, and you would hold back from helping him, you shall surely help him*.

This sense of "lying down" relates to *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as the bed of Her beloved, *Tif'eret* (identified with King Solomon).

On *Shekhinah* as "bed," see *Zohar* 1:37a, 225b, 226b, 248b, 250b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 30a–b, 48b, 51a, 133a, 226a; 3:60a, 114a, 118b, 119b, 120b, 148b, 269b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 370; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 62–

64 (78–79). Cf. BT *Shabbat* 55b, where it is said that Jacob kept a bed in his tent for *Shekhinah*. See Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *aḥat shel Shekhinah* and *ḥillalta*, and on Genesis 49:4.

According to the eleventh-century Catholic reformer Peter Damian, Mary is the golden couch upon which God, tired out by the actions of humanity and the angels, lies down to rest. See Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 280.

On the verse in Exodus, see Sarna, *Exodus*; and Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, ad loc. The context in Song of Songs (3:7–8) reads: *Here is the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding it* [or: *her*], *of the warriors of Israel—all of them skilled with a sword, expert in war, each with his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night*.

611. **like רביעית (*revi'it*), fourth, from Israel down…** The phrase "רובע (*rova*), *a fourth of, Israel*" implies that *Shekhinah* is the fourth *sefirah* counting down "from Israel"—namely from *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel)—*Tif'eret, Netsaḥ, Hod, Shekhinah*.

Shekhinah is also pictured as the fourth leg of the Throne, whose other legs are *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. Together, these four *sefirot* constitute a throne for the highest level of Divinity (or they support *Binah*, who constitutes that Throne).

On this interpretation of *rova*, cf. above, note 490. On the fourth leg of the divine throne, see also *Zohar* 1:5b, 20a, 82a, 89b (*ST*), 186a; 3:87b; above, p. 211, n. 70; Vol. 3, p. 134, n. 311.

612. **who are considered as dust…** That is, who humbly consider themselves as dust. See, e.g., Abraham's self-description Genesis 18:27: *I am but dust and ashes*.

613. ***Is there a number to His troops?…*** Referring to the countless angels (as above at note 608).

The concluding clause ("as we have established") apparently implies that "*Rova, A fourth of, Israel*" alludes to *Shekhinah*. See above, notes 609–11. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*.

614. **commandments pertaining to the dust…** Alternatively, the verse alludes to the numerous *mitsvot* pertaining to agriculture. See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 20; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:19; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 11, 41b; Rashi on Numbers 23:10.

615. ***Or numbered* רובע (*rova*), *the seed of, Israel*…** This sense of rova matches the meaning of the verb תרביע (*tarbi'a*), *you shall mate*, in the verse from Leviticus: *Your cattle* לא תרביע (*lo tarbi'a*), *you shall not mate, with a different kind*. Based on this verbal analogy, Rabbi Shim'on concludes that the verse in Numbers alludes to the numerous *mitsvot* relating to animals (such as the *mitsvah* in Leviticus).

Cf. the sources cited in the preceding note; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 23:10. On the meaning of rova, see above, note 487.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *My statutes you shall keep. Your cattle you shall not mate* כלאים (*kil'ayim*) *with a different kind; your field you shall not sow kil'ayim, with two kinds; and a garment of kil'ayim, two kinds of thread—*שעטנז (*sha'atnez*)*—shall not come upon you* [i.e., *shall not be donned by you*]. On this verse see Vol. 8, pp. 37–38, n. 110.

616. **Balak was more skilled in sorcery…** See above, note 583.

617. **ויישא משלו ויאמר (*Va-yissa meshalo va-yomar*), *He took up his verse and he said*…** The verb אמר (*'mr*), "to say," is considered less intense than דבר (*dbr*), "to speak." Here this implies that Balaam was conveying the words of someone else, as immediately explained.

On the semantic distinction between *dbr* and *'mr*, see above, note 390. The full verse in Numbers reads: *He took up* [or: *raised*] *his verse and he said, "From Aram did Balak lead me, the king of Moab, from the mountains of Qedem: 'Go, curse me Jacob, and go, doom Israel.'"* On the term משל (*mashal*), "verse, pronouncement, saying, proverb, parable," see Levine, *Numbers*, 2:102–3, 167–68.

618. **What is meant by…** Rabbi Ḥiyya reads the verb וישא (*va-yissa*) literally: *he raised*. Balaam raised his voice toward *Shekhinah*, who spoke the words Herself; so She is actually the subject of the continuation of the verse: *and he said*.

Shekhinah is known as *Koh* (thus, here). This enables Rabbi Ḥiyya to construe *ve-khoh tedabber*—whose simple sense is *and thus shall you speak*—as *and Koh* [namely *Shekhinah*] *shall speak*. See above, notes 388, 594.

619. **When Balaam saw…** That he could not prevail over *Shekhinah* (known as *Koh*), God then responded to him and threatened to detach him from his "chain," that is, from Balaam's link to sources of power.

The full verse in Numbers (recording Balaam's words) reads: *He said to Balak, "Station yourself here by your ascent offering*, ואנכי אקרה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh*), *and I will be happened upon* [or: *and I will allow myself to be encountered*; *and I myself will be encountered*; *and I will seek an occasional encounter*; *and I will seek some chance*], כה (*koh*), *yonder* [or: *here, hereabouts*].

Here Rabbi Ḥiyya transforms ואנכי אקרה כה (*ve-anokhi iqqareh koh*), *and I will be happened upon yonder*, into להאי כה אעקר (*e'qar le-hai koh*), "I will uproot this *Koh*," that is, "I will eliminate *Shekhinah*," who protects Israel. Similarly, the wording ויקר אלהים (*Va-yiqqar Elohim*), *God happened upon, Balaam* now implies that God "uprooted" Balaam. See above, notes 592, 597–98. The root עקר (*'qr*) means "to uproot, eradicate, detach."

Numbers 23:16 actually reads: ויקר יהוה (*Va-yiqqar YHVH*), *YHVH happened upon, Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus shall you speak."* The wording quoted here—*Va-yiqqar Elohim, God happened upon, Balaam*—appears in Numbers 23:4. See above, note 598.

620. **when he saw that he could not succeed…** In cursing Israel.

The full verse in Numbers (spoken by Balaam) reads: *Look, to bless I was summoned, and He blessed*, ולא אשיבנה (*ve-lo ashivennah*), *so I will not reverse it*. Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes *ve-lo ashivennah* hyperliterally—*so I will not reverse her*—and he explains that the feminine direct object refers to *Shekhinah* (known as *Koh*).

The second half of the verse can also be rendered: *and bless I must; I cannot reverse it*. On this verse, see Levine, *Numbers*, ad loc.; Milgrom, *Numbers*, ad loc.

621. **By two rungs…** By employing demonic forces corresponding to *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* (who are symbolized respectively by Jacob and Israel).

On the sefirotic significance of the names Jacob and Israel, see above, note 607. The full verse in Numbers reads: *He has countenanced* [or: *beheld*] *no* און (*aven*), *harm* [or: *disaster, iniquity*], *in Jacob, and has seen no trouble* [or: *mischief*] *in Israel. YHVH his God is with him, the king's trumpet blast in his midst*. On *aven* as *iniquity* in this verse, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 22; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20; Rashi and Ibn Ezra, ad loc.

622. **נחש (*naḥash*), *sorcery*, and קסם (*qesem*), *wizardry*…** These represent two demonic forces, drawn on by sorcerers and wizards. Corresponding to them are the two terms mentioned in Numbers 23:21: *He has beheld no* און (*aven*), *iniquity, in Jacob, and has seen no* עמל (*amal*), *mischief, in Israel*.

On the distinction between *qesem* and *naḥash*, see above, notes 183, 505. For the full text of Numbers 23:21, see the preceding note.

623. ***Surely there is no naḥash, sorcery…*** The full verse reads: *Surely there is no* נחש (*naḥash*), *omen* [or: *sorcery*], *in Jacob, no* קסם (*qesem*), *divination* [or: *wizardry*], *in Israel. Now be it said to Jacob; to Israel, what God plans to do* [or: *what God has planned*; *what God has wrought*].

624. **all the cohorts above…** The angels themselves do not comprehend the divine decrees, so they inquire of *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob and Israel).

The conclusion of the verse—*what God has planned*—is construed here as a question: *What does God plan to do?* See JT *Shabbat* 6:10, 8d; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 15, pp. 292–93; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 23; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20; Rashi on Numbers 23:23.

625. **All these words were said by *Koh*…** That is, by *Shekhinah*. See above, note 618.

626. ***Look, a people arises like a lion…*** Israel serves and praises God eagerly and mightily. Then at night, they recite the *Shema*, thereby sanctifying God's name and proclaiming Him King. This act of devotion binds and incapacitates harsh forces of judgment.

On the phrase "grows mighty as a lion…," see M *Avot* 5:20, in the name of Yehudah son of Teima: "Be bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fleet as a gazelle, and mighty as a lion, to do the will of your Father in Heaven."

On the effect of the *Shema*, see BT *Berakhot* 13b, where Rabbi Ḥiyya son of Abba describes the first line of *Shema* as proclaiming God "King above, below, and over the four directions of heaven."

On reciting "various verses of compassion," see BT *Berakhot* 5a, where Abbaye recommends that each night before going to bed, scholars should recite "a verse of compassion, such as *Into Your hand I entrust my spirit. You redeem me, O YHVH, God of truth* (Psalms 31:6)." Traditionally, this verse is included in the nightly recital of *Shema* before sleep. The verse begins: *Into Your hand I entrust* [or: *commend, commit, deposit*] *my spirit*. See above, note 358.

On this interpretation of the verse in Numbers, cf. *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 23; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:20; Rashi on Numbers 23:24. Cf. *Zohar* 1:178b, 190b; 3:25a. The full verse reads: *Look, a people arises like*

a lion, rears up like the king of beasts. He will not lie down till he devours the prey, and blood of the slain he drinks.

627. **they would see the image of a lion…** See BT *Yoma* 21b: “Five things were reported about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion, it was as clear as sunlight, its flame was of substance, it devoured wet wood like dry wood, and it caused no smoke to rise.” Cf. *Zohar* 1:6b; 3:32b–33a, 235a, 241a; *ZḤ* 44a; Todros Abulafia, *Sha’ar ha-Razim*, 90.

628. **the celestial angel אוריאל (*Uri’el*), Uriel…** Assuming the form of אריה (*aryeh*), “a lion.” See *Zohar* 1:6b; 3:32b–33a.

On the image of a dog replacing that of a lion, see the continuation of the passage in BT *Yoma* 21b (quoted in the preceding note): “It crouched like a lion? But, in fact, it has been taught: Rabbi Ḥanina, prefect of the priests, said, ‘I myself saw it, and it was crouching like a dog.’ There is no contradiction: the former refers to the First Temple, the latter to the Second Temple.” Here, Rabbi Abba resolves the conflicting views differently: when Israel proved worthy, Uriel appeared on the altar as a lion; if not, the image of an impudent dog appeared. See *Zohar* 1:6b (Vol. 1, p. 40, n. 279); 3:32b, 240a; cf. 3:91a.

629. ***till he devours the prey*—offerings of the night…** According to rabbinic law, sacrificial portions and fat that are not totally consumed by fire during the day can be burnt on the altar throughout the night.

See M *Berakhot* 1:1; BT *Berakhot* 26b; *Zohar* 2:130a, 141a, 162a; 3:30b, 32b; *ZḤ* 46c. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 626.

630. **before having slain 1,125 of those evil species…** Cf. BT *Berakhot* 5a: “Rabbi Yitsḥak said, ‘If someone recites *Shema* upon his bed, it is as though he holds a double-edged sword in his hand, as is said: *Exultations of God in their throat and a double-edged sword in their hand* (Psalms 149:6).’ How is this implied [in the Psalm]? Mar

Zutra (some say Rav Ashi) said, 'From the beginning of the context: *Let the devout delight in glory, sing for joy on their couches* (ibid., 5)—after which is written *Exultations of God in their throat and a double-edged sword in their hand*.' And Rabbi Yitsḥak said, 'If someone recites *Shema* upon his bed, demons keep away from him.'" On the Talmudic clause "it is as though he holds a double-edged sword in his hand, Rashi comments: "to kill the demons."

631. **They are a thousand...** Rabbi Abba indicates this round number of demonic forces, based on the verse in Psalms, which reads in full: *A thousand will fall at your side and ten thousand at your right, but you it will not approach*. Since the number *ten thousand* is explicitly linked with the right side, *a thousand* refers to the left.

How are these demonic forces overcome? By *the devout* singing *for joy on their couches*—that is, by their devoted recital of *Shema* as they lie on their beds. See the passage in BT *Berakhot*, quoted in the preceding note.

On the clause in Psalm 91 (*A thousand will fall at your side*) as referring to demons, see *Sifrei Zuta*, Numbers 6:24; *Tanḥuma, Vayetse* 3; *Mishpatim* 19; *Midrash Tehillim* 17:8. On the phrase *at your side* as referring to the left side, see *Zohar* 1:174b. The context in Psalms 149 (5–9) reads: *Let the devout delight in glory, sing for joy on their couches. Exultations of God in their throat and a double-edged sword in their hand, to wreak vengeance upon the nations, punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings in fetters, and their nobles in iron chains, to exact from them justice as written—it is grandeur for all His devoted ones. Hallelujah*.

632. **the three times that he struck his jenny...** Later, correspondingly, Balaam blessed Israel three times.

For the three times that Balaam struck his jenny, see Numbers 22:23, 25, 27 (quoted above, notes 515, 547). On Balaam "loading her with his sorceries," see above, note

580. For Balaam's three blessings of Israel, see Numbers 23–24.

633. **the three times that Israel makes pilgrimage…** On the three pilgrimage festivals: *Pesaḥ*, *Shavu'ot*, and *Sukkot*. See *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 13; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:14.

634. ***Balaam saw…*** The verse concludes: *but turned his face toward the desert*.

635. **Because those first two times…** That Balaam sought to curse Israel.

The subject "Another (is ready)" refers to *Shekhinah*. The full verse in Numbers reads: *YHVH put a word in Balaam's mouth, and He said, "Return to Balak* וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*), *and thus shall you speak."* Here, Rabbi Yose construes *ve-khoh tedabber* as *and Koh* [namely *Shekhinah*, who is called *Koh*, Thus] *shall speak*. See above, notes 388, 594.

636. **these two rungs—Jacob and Israel…** These two names symbolize respectively *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. Whereas Balaam sought to harm these divine qualities and the people of Jacob/Israel below, in fact, the people of Israel were blessed. On the sefirotic significance of the names Jacob and Israel, see above, notes 607, 621.

637. **At these two times…** The first two times that Balaam sought to curse Israel.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Balaam knew how to determine the precise moment each day when God becomes angry. By cursing at that moment, he could effectively doom Israel. However, on this particular day, Balaam saw that divine "wrath was nowhere to be found." See above, notes 180, 536, 583.

The phrase "another spirit" alludes to Numbers 24:2: *Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped by its tribes, and the spirit of Elohim was upon him*. On the interpretation of וכה תדבר (*ve-khoh tedabber*) as *and Koh shall speak*, see above, note 635. For the full text of Numbers 23:4 and 23:16, see above, notes 589, 598.

638. **What is the arousal here?** Rabbi Yehudah wonders how Balaam could have possibly experienced a divine arousal.

639. ***The spirit of Elohim*, and not *the spirit of YHVH*...** According to Rabbi Yose, *the spirit of Elohim* refers not to the spirit of God but to a spirit from the left side, deriving from Judgment (who is known as *Elohim*). Cf. above, note 395.

640. **even upon this...** Upon the spirit from the left side.

641. ***and the spirit of Elohim was upon him*...** Namely, upon Balaam.

The phrase "those other times" refers to the previous two times, when Balaam sought to curse Israel. For the full verse, see above, note 637.

642. **Certainly so!...** That is, "Of course, previously Scripture does not state *and the spirit of Elohim was upon him*." Now Rabbi El'azar begins to explain why.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *He that has a good* [or: *generous*] *eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. Here Rabbi El'azar quotes a Talmudic interpretation of this verse. See BT *Sotah* 38b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "We give the cup of blessing for the recital of Grace after Meals only to one who has a generous eye, as is said: *He that has a generous eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. Do not read *yevorakh, will be blessed*, but rather יְבָרֵךְ (*yevarekh*), *will bless*." See above, p. 260, n. 42. On Balaam's evil eye, see above, note 133.

643. **through the marketplace and is afraid...** He should cover the child's head. On the association of "the marketplace" with the evil eye, cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 50b.

644. **according to its translation...** Namely, the Aramaic translation of the verse. *Targum Yerushalmi* reads: "*but he turned his face toward the desert*, to recall against them the episode of the [Golden] Calf, which they made

there.” In other words, Balaam referred to that grave sin committed in *the desert* in order to stimulate and justify the cursing of Israel.

On the question of which *Targum* is intended here, see Rashi and Naḥmanides on Numbers 24:1; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 24:1, n. 7; ibid., vol. 35, pp. 142–43. For the beginning of the verse in Numbers, see above at note 634.

645. **Was *upon him*—that is, upon Israel…** According to the simple sense of the verse, of course, *upon him* refers to Balaam; but Rabbi El’azar adopts a midrashic reading that applies the phrase to Israel.

See above, note 454. On spreading a scarf over a child’s head to protect him from the evil eye, see above at note 643. Numbers 24:5 reads: *How goodly your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel!*

646. **Whoever wants to gaze with the evil eye…** By praising something explicitly, one actually invites a curse from the evil eye. So when Balaam declared *How goodly your tents, O Jacob*, he was trying to doom the people of Israel.

The “fine saplings” represent the righteous among Israel. Balaam wished that such individuals would arise only “from the poor,” so that they would have to spend much of their time earning a livelihood and thus be unable to devote themselves to studying Torah. See below.

On the image of saplings planted by God in the Garden of Eden, cf. Genesis 2:7–8: *YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and He placed there the human He had fashioned. YHVH Elohim caused to sprout from the soil every tree desirable to look at and good for food, and the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil*. The verse in Numbers following *How goodly your tents, O Jacob!…* reads: *Like aloes YHVH has planted* (Numbers 24:6), on which Rashi comments: “in the Garden of Eden.”

647. יזל מים מדליו (***Yizzal mayim mi-dalyav***), ***Water will drip from his boughs…*** In the parable, someone with an evil eye praises another person's hands and then wishes cruelly that those hands were in his own possession, making them useless to the person whose hands they actually are. Similarly, Balaam praised Israel by declaring *How goodly your tents, O Jacob!* and then wished that Israel's devotees of Torah would "arise only from the poor" and that *his seed* would be ruined, as seeds can be spoiled by too much water. This would ensure that the Holy Spirit would not flourish among Israel.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Water drips* [or: *flows*; *will drip*; *will flow*] מדליו (*mi-dalyav*), *from his boughs* [or: *from his buckets*], *and his root* [or: *and his seed*] *is* [or: *will be*] *in abundant waters. His king looms over Agag, and his kingship is exalted*. Here, drawing on a midrashic reading, Rabbi El'azar interprets the first part of the verse as: *May water* [namely Torah, which is compared to water] *flow* מדליו (*mi-dalyav*)—that is, מן הדלים שבו (*min ha-dalim she-bo*), "from the poor among them." See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:4; BT *Nedarim* 81a.

648. ***El, who brings him out of Egypt…*** Rabbi El'azar interprets the verse to mean that God's liberation of Israel from slavery makes them fiercely triumphant and invulnerable.

The full verse reads: *El, who brings him out* [or: *who brought him out*] *of Egypt, has antlers like a wild ox* [or:—*like the wild ox's antlers for him* (i.e., for Israel)]. *He consumes nations, his foes, and their bones he crushes, and smashes his* [i.e., *their*] *loins*. See Milgrom, *Numbers*; Levine, *Numbers*, on Numbers 23:22; 24:8.

649. **Even at a time when he is not elevated…** Even when Israel is in exile, the nations cannot prevail against them.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *He crouches, lies down like a lion, like the king of beasts—who can rouse*

him? Those who bless you are blessed, and your cursers are cursed.

650. **at first he was in Egypt…** According to rabbinic tradition, Balaam counseled Pharaoh on how to deal with the Israelites. Here, Rabbi El'azar indicates that Balaam taught the Egyptians how to enslave the Israelites permanently with sorcerous bonds.

On Balaam as one of Pharaoh's advisers, see above, note 152. On the sorcerous bonds in Egypt, see *Zohar* 2:25a, 37b–38a, 52b, 69a; 3:149a. Cf. above, note 190.

651. ***in days to come*** Or: *in the end of days*.

652. ***With you he shall stay…*** The full verse reads: *With you he shall stay, in your midst, in the place that he chooses within one of your gates wherever is good for him. You shall not mistreat him*.

653. **He went to those Mountains of Darkness…** To consult with Uzza and Aza'el, the fallen angels (and masters of sorcery) who are bound there in iron chains. See above, note 281; pp. 24–25, n. 61; p. 233, n. 3.

654. **Aza'el—the one called *eyes uncovered*…** The full verse reads: *Utterance of one who hears God's sayings, who beholds a vision of Shaddai*, נופל וגלוי עינים (*nofel u-glu'i einayim*), *falling with eyes uncovered* [literally: *falling and eyes uncovered*]. Cf. Numbers 24:16.

According to the simple sense of the verse, the phrase *falling with eyes uncovered* describes Balaam's ecstatic state. Here, however, Rabbi Yehudah draws on the Zoharic interpretation, which identifies *falling and eyes uncovered* with Uzza and Aza'el, who constitute the *vision of Shaddai* beheld by Balaam. See above, pp. 24–25, n. 61; p. 366, n. 236; p. 461, nn. 537–38.

The phrase "a little black creature" renders אוכימתא זעירא (*ukkimta ze'eira*), "a little black one." The association of such a black cat-like creature with demons derives from a passage in BT *Berakhot* 6a, in the name of Rava: "If one wishes to discover [demons], he should bring sifted ashes and

sprinkle them around his bed, and in the morning he will see something like the feet of a rooster. If one wishes to see them, he should bring the placenta of אוכמתא בת אוכמתא שונרתא (*shunarta ukkamta bat ukkamta*), a black shecat born of a black one, the firstborn of a firstborn, and roast it in fire and grind it and put some in his eye, and he will see them."

Note how Rabbi Yehudah also incorporates the elements of "ashes" and "a rooster" mentioned in this Talmudic passage. On the chain(s) reaching down to the abyss, see *Zohar* 3:233a; *ZḤ* 81b (*MhN, Rut*).

655. **and they call to him...** The subject is Uzza and Aza'el. See above, note 653.

656. **he told them what had happened...** How the Israelites had left Egypt despite all of Balaam's sorcery. (See above, note 650.)

By attempting "to return them to Egypt," Balaam was violating the commandment *You shall not hand over to his master a slave who escapes... from his master* (quoted above at note 652). The concluding clause means "so that no sorcery could harm Israel."

657. **when Balaam saw...** When he realized that his attempts to curse Israel had failed, Balaam advised King Balak on how to seduce the Israelites to consort with foreign women and commit idolatry. If Moses had not mentioned this in the Torah, "we would not know."

See above, notes 143, 145. The context in Numbers (31:15–16) refers to the Midianite women who had been captured by the Israelites: *Moses said to them* [namely the Israelite warriors], "*You have spared every female! Look, these are the ones who, by Balaam's word, led the Children of Israel to betray* YHVH *in the affair of Peor, and there was a plague among* YHVH*'s community*."

658. **Surely, by your own plot...** Balaam was killed in the ensuing war against Midian. See Numbers 31:8: *They killed the kings of Midian, besides their slain men—Evi and*

Rekem and Tsur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian —and Balaam son of Beor they killed by the sword.

659. **that power ruling over all his sorcery…** A demonic force on the left side, who showed Balaam the destiny of Israel. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

660. **Now, do they have permission?…** According to Kabbalah, demons can foresee only the near future.

Rabbi Yitsḥak explains that although Balaam's eye saw the destiny of Israel, the description of what he saw was actually spoken by *Shekhinah*, who was "standing above him." Accordingly the verse in Numbers implies that Balaam *took up*—or *raised*—his voice toward *Shekhinah*, who spoke the words Herself. She is actually the subject of the continuation of the verse: *and he said*. This way, the "disgusting words" of the evil Balaam did not contaminate this sublime passage of the Torah.

See above, note 618. On demons' limited knowledge of the future, see Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:83a, 130a, 200a; 2:195b, 251b (*Heikh*); 3:25a.

661. ***I see him, but not now…*** The context in Numbers (24:17–18) reads: *I see him, but not now. I gaze on him, but not soon. A star marches forth from Jacob, a meteor* [or: *a scepter*] *arises from Israel, and smashes the brow of Moab, the pate of* [or: *and razes*] *all the Sethites. Edom will be dispossessed, Seir dispossessed by its enemies; but Israel performs valiantly*.

Some of the prophecies in Numbers 24:17–24 "were fulfilled at that time" (apparently referring to the defeat of the Amorites and Midianites, described in Numbers 21 and 31), "and some of them afterward" in the time of King David (see 2 Samuel 8).

On the Messianic symbolism of the star, see the interpretation of Numbers 24:17 (*A star marches forth from Jacob*) in JT *Ta'anit* 4:5, 68d; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:20;

Tanḥuma (Buber), *Devarim*, add. 6; Naḥmanides on the verse; *Zohar* 1:119a; 2:7b–8a, 172b. Cf. *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi* on the verse; Revelation 22:16; Milgrom, *Numbers*, ad loc.

662. **In the future...** In this apocalyptic description the star symbolizes the appearance of the Messiah, while the "seventy other stars" represent the seventy nations of the world or their heavenly princes.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:119a; 2:7b–9a; *ZḤ* 55b–56c. On the seventy heavenly princes, see above, p. 50, n. 140. The term "fixed stars" refers to stars that do not seem to move in relation to the other stars of the night sky, as opposed to "wandering stars" (i.e., the planets), which seem to move and change their position over weeks or months.

663. **On the sixth day...** Of the week, namely Friday.

"The twenty-fifth day of the sixth month" corresponds to the twenty-fifth of Elul (counting from the month of Nisan). As pointed out by Adolph Jellinek, this date matches the day on which Pope Nicholas III (the "ruler" of "the city of Rome") suddenly died: August 22, 1280, which in that year fell on 25 Elul (of the Hebrew year 5040). This was the same pope with whom Abraham Abulafia attempted to meet.

See *Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:xxxvii-xxxviii; Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, 3. According to a rabbinic tradition (in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer), "The world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul." See *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 29:1; Vol. 8, pp. 140–41, n. 252. Cf. Vital; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nefesh David*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the chronological problem of the reading "the sixth day... the seventh day," see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nefesh David*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

664. **with no trust to be found...** The warring nations will be unable to forge any alliances and will continue attacking one another.

665. **holy ones of the Most High…** The phrase appears in Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27, where (as here) it refers to the people of Israel.

666. **the wicked Edom…** In rabbinic literature Edom often represents Rome, and in medieval literature it often represents Christendom or Christian rule. Seir was the territory inhabited by the Edomites. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 661.

667. ***The right hand of YHVH performs valiantly…*** Based on the following verse (*I shall not die but live…*), Rabbi Yitsḥak concludes that *YHVH performs valiantly* refers to resurrection of the dead.

The full verse in Zechariah reads: *YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His name one*.

668. ***Indeed, you shall leave with joy…*** According to Rabbi Abba, *joy* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who shared the experience of exile with Israel and with whom they will be redeemed.

See *Zohar* 3:8b, 118a. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, note 318. The verse in Isaiah (which describes Israel's "leaving" the Babylonian exile) reads in full: *Indeed, you shall leave with joy and be led in peace. The mountains and hills will break into jubilation before you, and all the trees of the field will clap hands*.

669. ***And [be led] in peace—this is jubilation…*** Whereas *joy* alludes to *Shekhinah, peace* refers to Her partner, *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One), who is also known as *jubilation* (a synonym of *joy*). On *peace* as a name of the blessed Holy One, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; above, p. 169, n. 8.

670. **This is Righteous One…** Rabbi Yitsḥak agrees that *joy* alludes to *Shekhinah*, but he contends that *jubilation* refers to *Yesod*, who is known as Righteous One. Both *Yesod* and *Shekhinah will abide in her*—namely in Zion (which is mentioned at the beginning of the verse in Isaiah). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

671. **Righteous One is called *jubilation*…** Rabbi Shim’on agrees with Rabbi Yitsḥak.

Ever since *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) “fell into exile” along with Her people, the union of the divine couple has been interrupted, so blessings have ceased to flow abundantly into the world from *Yesod*. However, in the time of Messianic redemption, *you shall draw waters with jubilation* (namely along with *Yesod*) *from the fountains of salvation*—that is, from the sources of Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah*.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *You shall draw waters in* [or: *with*] *jubilation from the fountains of salvation*.

672. **Alternatively, *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*…** They can be pictured as *the fountains of salvation*, conveying the flow of emanation to *Yesod*. Still, “all (issues) from deep flowing springs,” namely from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. On *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* as *fountains*, cf. *Zohar* 3:68a.

1. ***Hear, my son, the instruction of your father…*** This interpretation of *father* and *mother* is based on a passage in BT *Berakhot* 35b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa: "Whoever enjoys this world without reciting a blessing—it is as if he robs the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, as is said: *He who robs his father and mother and says, 'It is no crime,' is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24)—*father* is none other than the blessed Holy One… and *mother* is none other than Assembly of Israel."

In this Talmudic passage, Assembly of Israel apparently refers to a supernal hypostasis (the mother of Israel), as it does regularly in Kabbalah, designating *Shekhinah*. Here, Rabbi El'azar indicates that *your father* is *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One), while *your mother* is *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). This divine couple engenders souls.

See above, p. 395, n. 326; *Zohar* 2:85a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. The verse in Proverbs reads: *Hear, my son*, מוסר (*musar*), *the instruction* [or: *exhortation, warning, discipline*] *of, your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother*.

2. **whoever engages in Torah …** Is eventually welcomed into the heavenly realm. One who rises at midnight to study Torah is especially blessed.

The verse from Song of Songs is applied to the study of Torah in BT *Shabbat* 63a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "When two disciples of the wise listen to one another in *halakhah*, the blessed Holy One listens to their voice, as is said: *You who dwell in the gardens, companions listen for your voice; let me hear!*"

In this Talmudic passage, *you who dwell in the gardens* refers to the righteous *companions* who engage in Torah and *listen* to one another. God Himself says, *Let me hear!* See Rashi, ad loc. Here, *you who dwell in the gardens* apparently refers specifically to the righteous who rise at midnight to engage in Torah, while the *companions* are the

souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden (perhaps together with God Himself). Again, God says, *Let me hear!*

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:13; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 8:13; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 19, p. 117; *Midrash Tehillim* 116:1; *Zohar* 1:77b, 92a, 178b, 207b, 231a–b; 2:18b (*MhN*), 46a; 3:13a, 22a. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On Torah "preceding" one who devotes himself to Torah, cf. BT *Sotah* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: "Whoever fulfills a single commandment in this world—it precedes him, leading the way to the world that is coming."

On the midnight ritual of engaging in Torah, see above, p. 3, n. 6. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Open the gates, so that a righteous nation, keeping faith, may enter*.

3. **Rabbi Shim'on said...** He offers a different interpretation of the verse in Song of Songs. *You who dwell in the gardens* refers to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), whose fitting abode is in the Garden of Eden but who now languishes in exile along with Her people. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

4. **celestial camps...** Of angels, who listen for the sound of *Shekhinah* praising Her beloved, the blessed Holy One.

5. **when the night is split...** At midnight. Then, at dawn, these devotees accompany *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) to welcome King *Tif'eret* with the morning prayers. Thereby, they participate in the divine union, "take hold of... *Shekhinah*," and receive a flow of love.

On the thread of love, see BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, in the name of Resh Lakish: "To one who engages in Torah by night, the blessed Holy One extends a thread of love by day, as is said: *By day YHVH directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13, pp. 254–55; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 17, p. 22; *Midrash Mishlei* 31:15; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Talmud Torah* 3:13; *Zohar* 1:82b, 92a, 104a, 178b, 194b, 207b; 2:18b (*MhN*), 46a, 57a, 149a; 3:22a, 23b, 25a–b, 36a, 44b–45a, 64b–65a, 68a, 76a; *ZḤ* 18a (*MhN*), 47d (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54. On *Shekhinah*'s title *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

6. **Whoever is privileged...** Those who are intimately connected with *Shekhinah* should guard themselves vigilantly against any sexual sin, which threatens *Shekhinah*. Who are the vigilant devoted ones? Those who do not betray the holy covenantal sign of circumcision by having sexual relations with a Gentile woman. As a reward for their sexual purity, *Shekhinah* protects them.

The concluding phrase—"acting zealously for this"—means "acting zealously for the covenantal sign," alluding to the zealous deed of Phinehas. (See the following note.)

The wording "who do not betray the holy [covenantal] insignia" recalls Psalms 44:18: *We did not betray Your covenant*. The full verse in Malachi reads: *Judah has broken faith; an abhorrent act has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has desecrated the sanctuary of YHVH, which He loves, and has married the daughter of an alien god*. See *Zohar* 1:131b, 238b; 2:3b, 87b; 3:57b, 127a, 142a (*IR*).

7. **Israel deserved to be destroyed at that time...** At Abel Shittim (Brook of the Acacias), northeast of the Dead Sea, when many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. There the tribal chieftain Zimri son of Salu fornicated with a Midianite woman named Cozbi daughter of Zur. God was incensed, and He inflicted a plague upon the people; but immediately Phinehas, fueled by righteous zeal, killed the sinning couple—and the plague ceased.

Numbers 25:11 reads in full: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*.

8. ***Son of, son of,* twice...** The simple sense of the verse, of course, is that Phinehas was the *son of Eleazar*, who was the *son of Aaron*. But Rabbi Shim'on alludes to a deeper meaning involving Eleazar's two brothers, Nadab and Abihu, who were consumed by a divine blaze because when burning incense *they offered alien fire before YHVH* (Leviticus 10:1).

One midrashic tradition indicates that Nadab and Abihu died because they were not married. According to Kabbalah, if a married man dies childless, his soul rolls aimlessly through the world, unless his brother redeems this soul through performing levirate marriage: marrying the widowed wife, impregnating her, and consciously drawing that homeless soul into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the soul with another opportunity to fulfill itself on earth by engendering new life. Since Nadab and Abihu were not married when they died childless, their souls could not be redeemed by levirate marriage. Instead, the *Zohar* teaches, their "lost" souls were redeemed and "restored" by being reincarnated (or "impregnated") in their nephew Phinehas (the son of their brother Eleazar). So Phinehas was not only the *son of Eleazar*, but also, in a sense, the *son of Aaron*!

On Nadab and Abihu as being unmarried, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:9; Vol. 7, p. 16, n. 46. On reincarnation in Kabbalah, and the connection between levirate marriage and reincarnation, see above, pp. 98–99, n. 140. On the particular type of (usually temporary) reincarnation known as עִבּוּר (*ibbur*), "impregnation," see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 348–49; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 278.

On the reincarnation of Nadab and Abihu's souls in Phinehas, see *Zohar* 2:26b; 3:57a–b, 61b, 213b, 215b, 217a, 237b (*RM*); Vol. 7, pp. 367–68, n. 37; Yisraeli, "Ha-Mered ha-Qadosh," 95–98; Hellner-Eshed, "Ha-Meqanne la-Berit," 151–56. On the wording *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest*, see *Zohar* 3:57b, 217a. Cf. BT *Zevaḥim* 101b; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *va-yishma Pinḥas ha-kohen*.

9. **If a person obtains a recycled soul…** If a person's soul is reincarnated because he failed to live virtuously enough, and the next recipient of this "recycled soul" fails to rectify the fault, this second person, as it were, "falsifies the truth of the King"—that is, he ruins and betrays the sacred opportunity bestowed upon the soul by the Divine King.

The context in Leviticus (5:21–23) reads: *If a person sins and commits a sacrilege against YHVH by dissembling with his fellow about a deposit or pledge, or by robbery, or by withholding from his fellow; or if he finds something lost and dissembles about it* [or: *and denies it*] *and swears falsely about anything that a person may do to sin—it shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall return* [or: *restore*] *that which he robbed or that which he withheld, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost object that he found*.

Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets *if he finds something lost and denies it* as meaning "If a person *finds* within himself a reincarnated soul, which was wandering and *lost*, and he *denies* it the possibility of restoration." The phrase *and swears falsely* apparently now refers to the adjuration at the moment of birth to "be righteous and not wicked." See BT *Niddah* 30b; Vol. 7, p. 77, n. 237.

The phrase "a recycled soul" renders גלגולא דנשמתא (*gilgula de-nishmeta*), "the cycling (or revolving, transmigration, reincarnation) of a soul," that is, a soul that has been reincarnated. On the term *gilgula* (Hebrew, *gilgul*), see Vol. 5, pp. 38–39, n. 108.

For the expression “better for him if he had never been created!” see *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 1:5, 110c; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 24:3; JT *Berakhot* 1:2, 3b; *Shabbat* 1:2, 3b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 35:7; BT *Berakhot* 17a, *Eruvin* 13b; *Derekh Erets, Pereq Rabbi Shim’on* 8. Cf. M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: “Whoever contemplates four things, better for him if he had never come into the world: what is above? what is below? what was before? and what will be after? Whoever shows no concern for the glory of his Maker, better for him if had never come into the world!”

10. **A completely righteous person is not thrust aside…** In favor of someone else, as clarified below.

Rabbi Shim’on asks about the meaning of the term “incompletely righteous.” If a person’s deeds are flawed, how can he be called righteous in any sense?

On the distinction between a completely righteous person and an incompletely righteous one, see BT *Berakhot* 7a–b, *Megillah* 6b, *Bava Metsi’a* 71a, *Avodah Zarah* 4a.

11. **he has not taken tortuous convolutions…** He has lived so virtuously that there is no need for his soul to undergo transmigration and be reincarnated in another person in order to be fulfilled and redeemed. Rather, with his own original soul (“inheritance”) he builds a fine and noble life. The term “convolutions” renders גלגולין (*gilgulin*). See above, near the end of note 9.

12. **with another’s inheritance…** With a reincarnated soul. By living virtuously, this second person manages to fulfill and restore the soul; but in the eventual resurrection of the dead, the soul may return to the body of the first person (who originally possessed that soul). Thus although the second possessor of the soul has lived righteously, ultimately he may not retain that “inheritance.” For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

13. **This may be compared to a person…** One who has “inherited” a reincarnated (and unfulfilled) soul and

lives virtuously is like someone who builds a beautiful structure but then discovers that the foundation is shoddy and unstable. Such a person is considered "incompletely righteous"—and in the resurrection of the dead, he may be "thrust aside" in favor of the original possessor of the soul, to whom that soul will be restored.

Now the verse in Habakkuk implies that *the* relatively *wicked* original possessor of the soul *swallows up* (i.e., thrusts aside and displaces) *the one more righteous than he*, namely the second possessor of the soul. The latter is *more righteous than* the former yet "incompletely righteous," whereas someone whose virtuous life is based on his own original soul is "completely righteous" and can never be thrust aside.

See BT *Berakhot* 7b, in the name of Rav Huna: "What is the meaning of the verse *Why do You tolerate traitors, and keep silent while the wicked swallows up the one more righteous than he?* (Habakkuk 1:13). Can the wicked swallow up the righteous?... This means, however: He swallows up one who is only *more righteous than he*, but he cannot swallow up one who is completely righteous."

The full verse in Habakkuk reads: *You whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil, who cannot tolerate* [or: *countenance*; *look idly at*] *wrongdoing, why do You tolerate traitors, and keep silent while the wicked swallows up the one more righteous than he?* On the passage in *Berakhot*, see BT *Megillah* 6b, *Bava Metsi'a* 71a.

14. **If one acts zealously...** Like Phinehas, who killed the fornicating couple Zimri and Cozbi, thereby assuaging God's wrath. (See above, note 7.) As a reward for his zealous deed, Phinehas was granted *a covenant of eternal priesthood*, which until then he did not deserve.

See BT *Zevaḥim* 101b (in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina), "Phinehas was not elevated to the priesthood until he killed Zimri." (This passage figures below at note 30.)

The clause “all was rectified within him” alludes to the reincarnation of the souls of Nadab and Abihu within Phinehas. Similarly, the wording *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest* implies that Phinehas “consummated two”—that is, he fulfilled his own soul (becoming the complete *son of Eleazar*), and he restored the souls of Nadab and Abihu, “rectifying what had been contorted” by their fatal sin and thereby becoming, in a sense, the *son of Aaron*. See above, note 8.

The phrase “the supreme priesthood” refers to the status of high priest, which Phinehas later assumed upon the death of his father, Eleazar. The context in Numbers (25:11–13) reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal. Therefore say: I hereby grant him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of eternal* [or: *perpetual*] *priesthood in recompense for his acting zealously for his God and atoning for the Children of Israel*.

15. ***Protect my soul, for I am faithful…*** The end of the verse reads: *O You, my God, deliver Your servant* אליך הבוטח (*ha-boteaḥ elekha*), *who trusts in You*. Rabbi Yehudah construes the word *elekha* hyperliterally (*to You*), and he wonders why the verse does not read הבוטח בך (*ha-boteaḥ bekha*), *who trusts in You*. He explains that King David (the Psalmist) was implying: *Deliver Your servant* אליך המבטיח (*ha-mavtiaḥ elekha*), *who promises to You*. David’s specific promise to God was that he would always rise at midnight to praise Him.

Since David already followed this custom, the verse in Psalm 119 should read *At midnight* קמתי (*qamti*), *I rose, to praise You*. However, David employed the imperfect form אקום (*aqum*), *I will rise*, which conveys the future tense, in order to assure God that he would maintain this practice forever.

See BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "There was a harp suspended above [King] David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn." See above, note 2; p. 3, n. 6.

The verse in Psalm 86 reads: *Protect* [or: *Preserve*] *my soul, for I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *faithful* [or: *devout, devoted* (*to You*)]. *O You, my God, deliver Your servant who trusts* אליך (*elekha*), *in You* [literally: *to You*]. On this verse, see *Zohar* 3:195a–b, 222a. The full verse in Psalm 119 reads: *At midnight* אקום (*aqum*), *I rise* [or: *I will rise*], *to praise You for Your righteous judgments*.

16. **שמרה (*Shomrah*), *Protect, my soul*...** This spelling actually represents an unusual form of the masculine imperative, but because of the concluding letter ה (*he*), Rabbi Yehudah construes it as feminine. So he wonders why King David didn't employ the (normal) masculine imperative form, שמור (*shemor*). Since every single letter of the Torah contains profound mysteries, this letter ה (*he*) must too. Rabbi Yehudah explains that the (supposedly) feminine form שמרה (*shomrah*) is addressed to *Shekhinah* (here called "the blessed Holy One"). This is completely appropriate because the soul of King David (the ideal king) is intimately linked with the *sefirah* (or "portion") of *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom).

Upon death, when the soul departs from this world, she proceeds to the celestial world. If she is worthy, many angels escort her to her paradisal abode, and *Shekhinah*—symbolized by the feminine marker ה (*he*)—protects her.

On the masculine imperative form שמרה (*shomrah*), see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §48i. The actual feminine form is שמרי (*shimri*). On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13. On the bliss of souls of the righteous on new moons and Sabbaths, see above, p. 31, n. 79.

17. **If she is not worthy…** Such a soul is thrust aside and barred from Paradise.

On the fate of such souls (and the verse in Samuel), see BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "The souls of the righteous are treasured away under the Throne of Glory, as is said: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life* (1 Samuel 25:29). Those of the wicked are continually muzzled, while one angel stands at one end of the world and another stands at the other end, and they sling their souls [i.e., the souls of the wicked] to each other, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*." See above, pp. 241–42, n. 29.

The *Zohar*'s phrase "in the hollow of a sling" renders בקוספתא (*be-quspeta*). On the neologism *quspeta* (and its variants), see *Zohar* 1:77b, 217b; 2:59a, 99b (Vol. 5, pp. 36–37, n. 105), 103a, 106a, 109a; 3:50b; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *turpei de-qaspeta*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345–48.

The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail's blessing to David) reads: *If a person rises to pursue you, to seek your life, the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God, and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*.

The phrase "dazzling demonic wardens" renders טהירין גרדיני (*gardinei tehirin*). The first word is based on the Castilian *guardián*, "guardian." See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246–48. As for טהירין (*tehirin*), it derives from the Aramaic root meaning "brightness, noon." One class of demons is named טהרי (*tiharei*), "noonday demons." See Vol. 7, p. 412, n. 167.

18. **David pleaded before the blessed Holy One…** That is, before *Shekhinah*. See above, note 16.

19. ***For I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *devoted*…** The verse reads: *Protect my soul, for I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *faithful* [or: *devout, devoted* (*to You*)]. See above, note 15.

But since King David is intimately associated with *Shekhinah*, how can he be called חסיד (*ḥasid*), which pertains to a different *sefirah, Ḥesed?*

20. **Yes, as is written…** Rabbi Yehudah explains that David is appropriately called חסיד (*ḥasid*), since his *sefirah* (*Shekhinah*) receives a flow of emanation from *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, which are called *faithful* חסדי דוד (*ḥasdei david*), *acts of love for David*—namely for *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by David.

On *ḥasdei david*, *acts of love for David*, see *Zohar* 1:8a, 219a; 2:169a; 3:21a, 40b, 262b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 48 (59).

21. **Every person who has a share in the Righteous One…** Rabbi Yitsḥak offers another reason why David is called *ḥasid*. Everyone who remains sexually pure (by not violating any of the relevant commandments) becomes linked with *Yesod* (the divine phallus), who is known as Righteous One. Thereby, he inherits *Shekhinah* (*Yesod*'s partner), who is symbolized by *the land*. *Yesod* Himself conveys the flow from *Ḥesed*, so He "is called *ḥasid*." Since David was associated with *Shekhinah*, he, too, was linked to *Yesod*, so he could call himself *ḥasid*.

On the association of *Ḥesed* with *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 3:142a (*IR*); Vol. 8, pp. 430–31, n. 394; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified*. Here, the term *righteous* alludes to *Yesod*, the Righteous One. See above, p. 38, n. 105.

22. ***A testimony He placed it* ביהוסף (*bi-Yhosef*), *in Joseph…*** The full verse in Psalms reads: *A testimony He ordained it* [literally: *placed it*] *in* [or: *for*] *Joseph, when He went forth against the land of Egypt—a language I knew not, I heard*.

According to the simple sense of the verse, *a testimony* refers to the regulations governing the new moon at the beginning of Israelite history in the Exodus story. The concluding clause is a kind of interjection by the Psalmist—who is a representative Israelite, recalling "his" time of

enslavement in Egypt when his taskmasters spoke an alien tongue. See Alter, *The Book of Psalms*, 289.

Here, Rabbi Aḥa refers to a Talmudic treatment of the verse. See BT *Sotah* 36b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "At the moment when Pharaoh said to Joseph, *Without you no man shall raise hand* [*or foot in all the land of Egypt*] (Genesis 41:44), Pharaoh's astrologers exclaimed: 'Will you empower over us a slave whom his master bought for twenty pieces of silver!' He replied to them, 'I discern in him royal characteristics.' They said to him, 'If so, he should know the seventy languages [of the world, which were taught to royalty].' Gabriel came and taught [Joseph] the seventy languages, but he could not learn them. So [Gabriel] added to his name one letter from the Name of the blessed Holy One [namely the letter ה (*he*)], and he learned [the languages], as is said: *A testimony He placed it* ביהוסף (*bi-Yhosef*), *in Joseph, when He went forth against the land of Egypt—a language I knew not, I heard* (Psalms 81:6). On the next day, in whatever language Pharaoh conversed with him he replied to him; but when [Joseph] spoke to him in the holy tongue [Pharaoh] did not understand what he said…."

Instead of "seventy languages," the *Zohar* refers here to seventy פתקין (*pitqin*), "slips, memoranda, notes, records," derived from Greek *pittakion*. On the passage in BT *Sotah*, see *Sotah* 33a; *Zohar* 1:89a (*ST*); 2:41b. On the divine element within יהוסף (*Yehosef*), see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:10; BT *Sotah* 10b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17, pp. 321–22; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:5; *Zohar* 2:221b; 3:14a.

23. **When Potiphar's wife grabbed him…** As described in the verse from Genesis: *She seized him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled and went out*. (For the context, see below, note 28.)

The Holy Spirit (often identified with *Shekhinah*) called out an appropriate verse from Proverbs, warning Joseph to resist the overt sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. This indicates that whoever withstands sexual temptation becomes linked with *Shekhinah* and grasps the *testimony*, which here apparently refers to *Shekhinah* (or alternatively to Her partner, *Yesod*). The union of *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* is symbolized by the pleonastic spelling יהוסף (*Yehosef*), which adds the letter ה (*he*), signifying *Shekhinah*, to the name יוסף (*Yosef*), "Joseph," symbolizing *Yesod*.

Similarly, the spelling פינחס (*Pineḥas*), "Phinehas," includes the letter י (*yod*)—or a small י (*yod*)—symbolizing *Shekhinah*, because Phinehas acted zealously for Her.

On the sefirotic significance of *testimony*, cf. Vol. 6, p. 266, n. 18. On the divine element within יהוסף (*Yehosef*), see the preceding note. On the significance and size of the letter י (*yod*) in פינחס (*Pineḥas*), see below, note 56. On Phinehas's zealous action, see above, note 7. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

24. ***when we remembered Zion…*** Since four verses later, this same Psalm reads: *If I forget you, Jerusalem*, the opening verse should match this by stating *when we remembered Jerusalem*.

The full later verse reads: *If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither* [or: *forget its cunning*]. *May my tongue cleave to my palate if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy*.

25. ***Shekhinah* is in exile…** Along with Her people. The one who feels Her absence most severely is Her partner, *Yesod*, who is known as *Zion*. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

26. ***The righteous one loses…*** The simple sense of this verse is: *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *perishes* [or: *is lost*], but here Rabbi Yeisa construes *avad* as *loses*. *Yesod*

(known as *the righteous one*) feels anguish over "losing" His partner, *Shekhinah*.

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:55b, 182a, 196b; 2:9b, 11a, 57a–b; 3:176b, 69a, 150b, 266b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 73.

27. **Whoever honors the name of his Lord…** By resisting sexual temptation and thereby guarding the covenantal sign of circumcision. Joseph, who did so, was greatly honored by Pharaoh. Many years later, during the Exodus, Moses took Joseph's bones out of Egypt (see Exodus 13:19); and according to a midrashic tradition, for the sake of (or upon seeing the remains of) this righteous hero, the waters of the Red Sea split. Here, based on that tradition, Rabbi Yeisa interprets the verse in Psalms (*The sea saw and fled*) as: *The sea saw* Joseph—the one of whom is written *He fled* [from Potiphar's wife] *and went out*—and so the sea *fled*, splitting its waters.

On the tradition of the Red Sea splitting for Joseph's sake, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:15; *Bereshit Rabbah* 87:8; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 9, *Naso* 30; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 34; *Midrash Tehillim* 114:9; *Zohar* 2:49a, 230b.

The full verse in Genesis 41 reads: *He* [i.e., Pharaoh] *had him ride in the chariot of his viceroy, and they called out before him Avrekh* [apparently meaning "make way"], *setting him over all the land of Egypt*. The full verse in Genesis 39 reads: *She seized him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled and went out*. For the context, see the following note.

28. **He attained honor in his life…** Joseph was elevated by Pharaoh to the position of vizier. Then, after he died, he entered the heavenly realm.

The context in Genesis (39:7–12) reads: *It happened after these things that his master's wife raised her eyes to Joseph and said, "Lie with me." He refused. And he said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master has given*

no thought to what is in his house, and all that belongs to him he has placed in my hands. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, since you are his wife. So how could I do this great evil, and sin against God?" And much as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her, to be with her. And it happened, on one such day, that he came into the house to perform his task, and there was no man of the men of the house there in the house. And she seized him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled and went out.

29. **Phinehas attained in this world…** God bestowed upon *him and… his seed after him a covenant of eternal priesthood* (Numbers 25:13). When Phinehas's father Eleazar died, Phinehas became the high (or "supreme") priest.

On Phinehas's longevity, see Judges 20:28; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 20; *Seder Olam*, ed. Milikowsky, 2:316; *Bereshit Rabbah* 60:3 (and parallels); *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:1 (and parallels); Rashi and David Kimḥi on Judges 2:1; 6:8; Sforno on Numbers 25:12. According to a rabbinic tradition, the zealous Phinehas is identified with the zealous prophet Elijah, who lived hundreds of years later, in the 9th century B.C.E. See below, note 33.

On the line of Phinehas and the high priesthood, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 131; BT *Zevaḥim* 101b; Rashi and David Kimḥi on 1 Samuel 2:30; Milgrom, *Numbers*, 479; Levine, *Numbers*, 2:297–300.

30. **in fact, he attained the priesthood before performing this deed…** Rabbi Yeisa is responding to a Talmudic tradition recorded in BT *Zevaḥim* 101b (in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina), "Phinehas was not elevated to the priesthood until he killed Zimri, as is written: *And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of eternal priesthood* [*in recompense for his acting zealously for his God*] (Numbers 25:13)."

According to this view, the wording *in recompense for his acting zealously for his God* implies that before Phinehas acted zealously by killing Zimri, he had not yet been elevated to the priesthood. Rabbi Yeisa, however, contends that actually Phinehas had already been elevated. But if so, why does the verse read *in recompense for his acting zealously for his God?*

See Vital. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the passage in BT *Zevaḥim*, see Rashi on Numbers 25:13. Cf. Naḥmanides on Exodus 28:1. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 14.

31. **Every priest who kills a person disqualifies himself...** Because by such a violent act he betrays and taints the rung of *Ḥesed* (Love), with which all priests are linked. Phinehas, however—who had already been elevated to the priesthood—did not disqualify himself by killing Zimri and Cozbi, since he acted zealously for God. This is why the verse in Numbers specifies that he was assured eternal priesthood *in recompense for his acting zealously for his God*.

On a priest disqualifying himself by killing someone, cf. BT *Berakhot* 32b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Any priest who kills a person may not lift up his hands [to recite the priestly benediction], for it is said: [*When you spread your hands* (in prayer), *I will hide My eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen;*] *your hands are full of blood* (Isaiah 1:15)."

See also *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 4; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefillah u-Nsi'at Kappayim* 15:3; below at notes 143, 169; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Margaliot, "Ha-Rambam ve-ha-Zohar," 386–87; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 25:13, n. 115.

32. **Phinehas was designated above and below...** His soul preexisted in heaven "above" and was already destined for greatness, and he was mentioned "below" in

the biblical genealogy of the Israelites in Egypt even before he was born.

See Exodus 6:25: *Eleazar son of Aaron took himself one of the daughters of Putiel as a wife, and she bore him Phinehas*. Rabbi Yitsḥak assumes that although Phinehas's birth is recorded here before the Exodus, he was actually born later. See *Zohar* 2:26b; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

33. ***peace* from the Angel of Death...** Phinehas is identified with the prophet Elijah, who lived hundreds of years later (in the 9th century B.C.E.) and did not undergo the normal experience of death, but rather *ascended in a whirlwind to heaven* (2 Kings 2:11).

Phinehas attained this unique status because he acted zealously to preserve the sexual purity of Israel, thereby becoming linked with *Yesod*, the divine phallus and source of vitality. *Yesod* is associated with the covenant of circumcision and called Covenant. Alternatively, "this holy Covenant" refers to *Shekhinah*, who sometimes shares the designation Covenant with *Yesod*.

On Elijah's being identified with Phinehas, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 6:18; Numbers 25:12; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 114a–b, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *lav kohen mar*; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 29, 47; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:3; *Zohar* 1:209b; 2:190a; 3:215a (*RM*), 282a (*RM*); *ZḤ* 84c (*MhN, Rut*); Origen on John 6:7; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:316–17, n. 3. Cf. Pseudo-Philo 48:1–2.

On Elijah's escaping death, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan*, 26a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Elijah is [still] alive!" On his role as precursor of the Messiah, see Malachi 3:23–24. On various aspects of Elijah's continued existence, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 6:333–34; Vol. 5, p. 2, n. 4; p. 484, n. 834. On Phinehas's longevity, see above, note 29. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 14.

34. ***He showed me Joshua the high priest...*** The context (Zechariah 3:1–7) reads: *He showed me Joshua the*

high priest, standing before the angel of YHVH, והשטן (*ve-ha-satan*), *and the Accuser* [or: *and Satan*], *standing at his right to accuse him. YHVH said to the Accuser, "May YHVH rebuke you, O Accuser; may YHVH, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel.* [*The angel*] *spoke up and said to his attendants, "Take the filthy garments off him!" And he said to him, "See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in robes." Then I gave the order: "Let a pure diadem be placed on his head." And they placed the pure diadem on his head and clothed him in garments, as the angel of YHVH remained standing* [or: *stood by*]. *The angel of YHVH solemnly advised Joshua, saying, "Thus says YHVH Tseva'ot: If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and guard My courts, and I will let you move about among these standing here."* The conclusion implies that Joshua will be rendered fit to associate with the heavenly beings. On this biblical passage, see above, p. 118, n. 195.

Rabbi El'azar concludes that if someone as virtuous as Joshua the high priest is vulnerable in the afterlife to Satan the Accuser, then what hope is there for those who fail to perceive God's glory? See above, p. 119, n. 198.

On the daily herald, cf. *Avot* 6:2, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi, "Every single day an echo resounds from Mount Horeb [Sinai], proclaiming: 'Woe to creatures for the humiliation of Torah!'"

On the image of (heavenly) advocates and accusers, see M *Avot* 4:11, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Ya'akov: "A person who performs a single *mitsvah* acquires one defender; a person who commits a single transgression acquires one accuser." See Vol. 8, p. 17, nn. 50–51.

35. ***Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments…*** Rabbi El'azar indicates that in the afterlife the soul of a sinner is clothed in *filthy garments*.

According to BT *Sanhedrin* 93a (in the name of Rav Pappa), Joshua's *filthy garments* signified his failure to prevent his sons from immoral behavior. See above, p. 104, n. 22. Cf. p. 118, n. 195.

The sinful soul's *filthy garments* represent the converse of a righteous soul's splendid garments, woven out of its good deeds. See *Zohar* 1:224a–b (Vol. 3, p. 347, n. 249); 2:210a (Vol. 6, p. 197, n. 266). Cf. the related theme of the ethereal body, discussed above, pp. 30–31, n. 78.

On Dumah, the angel appointed over Hell, see above, p. 243, n. 32. For the context in Zechariah, see the preceding note.

36. **he was stripped of those…** Phinehas was stripped of his physical body (or "garments") and clothed in spiritual garments.

37. **Surely this shade is joy of the soul!** Cf. *Zohar* 2:127a: "How pleasant is the shade of these trees covering us! We must adorn this place with words of Torah." See also *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Vol. 5, p. 304, n. 318.

38. **the Festival…** Namely, *Sukkot*.

39. **have been aroused by them** Rendering אתערו בהו (*it'aru beho*), "have been aroused by them (or have discussed them)." See above, p. 312, n. 53.

40. **the Supreme Lamp** Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai, whose frequent title is בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp." See above, p. 27, n. 68.

41. **the Reapers of the Field** Those who harvest secrets of Torah, which can be pictured as sprouting in the field of *Shekhinah*.

See *Zohar* 1:156a (*ST*), 216a; 2:37a, 79b, 85b, 240b, 258a (*Heikh*); 3:127b (*IR*), 141b (*IR*), 143a (*IR*), 144a (*IR*), 214b, 297a; *ZḤ* 85d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 175–76, n. 99. On *Shekhinah* as a field, see above, p. 459, n. 532.

42. **The sequence of unifying all into one…** The unification of the *sefirot*.

43. ***His holy arm…*** The divine left arm, *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment). This conveys passion toward *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who lies in the dust of exile.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:300. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His left hand* [or: *arm*] *beneath my head, his right embracing me*.

44. **the right comes to embrace…** The divine right arm, *Ḥesed*, embraces *Shekhinah*—matching the conclusion of the verse from Song of Songs: *his right embracing me*. Then She unites with *Tif'eret*, pictured as the trunk of the divine male body.

45. **Similar to this, the sequence of these days…** The days from Rosh Hashanah through *Sukkot* represent stages in the process of sefirotic unification. On Rosh Hashanah (the Day of Judgment), the divine left arm, *Din* (Judgment), expresses passion toward *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*). See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1241.

46. **on the ninth of the month…** Of Tishrei, immediately preceding Yom Kippur. On this day the people of Israel ("the members of the palace") should rejoice, in expectation of God's mercy and forgiveness, and immerse themselves in preparation for the divine unification.

On rejoicing on the ninth of Tishrei, see BT *Berakhot* 8a, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya son of Rav of Difti: "It is written: *You shall afflict yourselves* [or: *your souls*] *on the ninth of the month in the evening* (Leviticus 23:32). Now, do we fast on the ninth? We actually fast on the tenth! But this teaches you: Whoever eats and drinks on the ninth, Scripture accounts it to him as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth." See Vol. 7, p. 455, n. 304.

47. **She forgives them…** *Shekhinah* forgives them, once She is illumined by *Binah*, the Divine Mother.

The phrase "in Her coupling" apparently means "as the union of *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* begins" with the divine left hand being placed beneath Her head. See the preceding

sentence in the *Zohar*; *Nitsotsei Orot* on *Zohar* 3:100b, n. 3; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1271–72, n. 267; Vol. 8, p. 140, n. 251.

On *Binah* as illumining *Shekhinah* on Yom Kippur, see *Zohar* 2:184b–185b; 3:100b, 102a–b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 163.

48. **On the first day of the Festival…** *Sukkot* is associated with *Ḥesed*, the divine right arm, which signifies joy.

On *Sukkot*, a special water libation was performed on the altar in the Temple, to call forth rain during the upcoming winter. During the intermediate days of the festival there were joyous celebrations involving music, singing, and dancing with burning torches. According to M *Sukkah* 5:1, "Whoever has not seen the rejoicing at the place of waterdrawing has never seen joy in his life."

On the significance of *Sukkot*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1248–54. On the water libation, see *Zohar* 1:226b, 261b–262a (*Hash*); 3:54b (*Tos*), 256a (*RM*), 259a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1251.

49. **on the eighth day is Joy of Torah…** Following the seven days of *Sukkot* comes *Shemini Atseret* (the Eighth [Day] of Assembly), which in the land of Israel is also celebrated as *Simḥat Torah* (Joy of Torah), when the reading of the Torah scroll is completed and then immediately begun again. (In the Diaspora, *Simḥat Torah* is celebrated on the second day of *Shemini Atseret*.) In Kabbalah, the Written Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, while the Oral Torah symbolizes *Shekhinah*. On this day of "Joy of Torah," *Shekhinah* consummates Her union with *Tif'eret* (pictured as the trunk of the divine male body).

The book of Numbers states that during the seven days of *Sukkot* a total of seventy bulls are to be sacrificed on the altar; according to rabbinic tradition, these benefited the seventy nations of the world. Following the seventh day of the festival, on the Eighth Day of Assembly, God rejoices with Israel alone.

On the seventy bulls, see Numbers 29:12–34. On these bulls and the seventy nations, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:23; BT *Sukkah* 55b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:9; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pineḥas* 14–15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:24; *Zohar* 1:64a–b, 208b, 221a (standard editions); 2:58b–59a, 135a, 185a, 186b–187a, 233b; 3:24b, 32a, 54b–55a (*Tos*), 92a, 96b–97a, 103b (*Piq*), 104b, 258b–259a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 177–78; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1251–53; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 244, n. 92. On Israel having God all to themselves on *Shemini Atseret*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:9; Vol. 8, pp. 182–83, n. 369.

The expression חדוותא דאורייתא (*ḥedveta de-oraita*), "Joy of Torah," is the Aramaic equivalent of שמחת תורה (*Simḥat Torah*), the Hebrew name of the holiday. The celebration of *Simḥat Torah* developed in Babylonia in Geonic times. See *Zohar* 3:96b–97a, 256b (*RM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1253–54.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God. You has YHVH chosen to be a treasured people to Him among all the peoples on the face of the earth*. Cf. Deuteronomy 14:2.

50. ***Phinehas son of Eleazar*** The full verse reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*.

51. **There we have learned: Whoever sees a rainbow…** According to Genesis 9:8–17, after the Flood God made a covenantal promise with Noah and his sons that He would never again inundate the world. As a sign of this covenant, God offered the rainbow.

See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 7: "Whoever sees a rainbow in the clouds must recite a blessing. What does he recite? 'Blessed is the One who remembers the covenant, is faithful to His covenant, and fulfills His word.'" See *Tosefta*

Berakhot 6:5; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; BT *Berakhot* 59a; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 6.

In rabbinic literature the formula "There we have learned" introduces a Tannaitic teaching. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *For this to Me is like the waters of Noah: As I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth, so I swear not to be angry with you or rebuke you*.

52. **The rainbow appears in order to protect the world…** The rainbow symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who displays the full spectrum of sefirotic colors and qualities (Her royal garments). She assuages the anger of the Divine King, thereby protecting the world.

On the sefirotic symbolism of the rainbow, see Vol. 5, p. 32, n. 93; Vol. 8, pp. 24–25, n. 71. On *Shekhinah*'s preventing punishment by the wrathful masculine divinity, see *Zohar* 2:190b.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The bow shall be in the cloud and I will see it* [or: *her*], *to remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures, all flesh that is on the earth*. See *Zohar* 1:72b, 117a.

53. **When there is a righteous person on earth…** Such a person himself serves as a sign of the covenant, so the rainbow (symbolizing *Shekhinah* and the covenant) is unnecessary. A human righteous person represents *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), who is the divine phallus, associated with the covenant of circumcision.

On the righteous person (or specifically Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai) replacing the rainbow, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15; BT *Ketubbot* 77b; *Midrash Tehillim* 36:8; *Zohar* 1:225a; 3:15a, 36a; *ZḤ* 10d (*MhN*); Scholem, "Parashah Ḥadashah," p. 432, n. 29; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 15. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

54. **garments of the primordial patriarchs…** The patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—symbolize the

sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, which emanate to *Shekhinah*, "clothing" Her.

When Ishmael issued from Abraham, this patriarch's garment was imbued with green, which is the traditional color of Islam.

When Esau issued from Isaac, the latter's garment was imbued with red. Esau is the progenitor of אדום (*Edom*), "Edom," which is associated with the color אדום (*adom*), "red." This color characterizes the planet Mars (the Red Planet), which appears reddish due to the fact that its surface is rich in iron oxide and thus "rusty." The reddish color of Mars is reflected in its Hebrew name: מאדים (*Ma'dim*), literally "that which makes red," deriving from *adom*, "red." In Roman mythology, Mars was the god of (bloody) war. In Kabbalah, red signifies *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. In rabbinic literature Esau and Edom often represent Rome, and in medieval literature they often represent Christendom or Christian rule.

All of Jacob's children were Israelites, so his color was pure white and his "countenance never changed." On the rainbow's colors, see Vol. 1, p. 421, n. 608.

55. **That is fine, but...** Rabbi Abba acknowledges that Rabbi El'azar's interpretation of the colors fits the three patriarchs and their children, but he transmits a teaching from Rabbi Shim'on ("the Holy Lamp") that demonstrates the relationship between the colors and the "patriarchal" *sefirot*.

White represents the pure quality of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham, who was "whitened" by fire when he was cast into a blazing furnace by Nimrod after refusing to worship idols. Red signifies the harsh quality of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. The harmonious color green signifies Jacob's *sefirah, Tif'eret*, which harmonizes the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Din*.

Jacob's "whole bed was perfect" because, unlike his father and grandfather, all his sons were virtuous Israelites.

He absorbed and blended the colors white and red, and thereby surpassed both Isaac and Abraham.

Shekhinah (symbolized by the rainbow) clothes Herself in all three sefirotic colors when She appears before King *Tif'eret*.

On Jacob's bed being perfect and unblemished, see BT *Pesaḥim* 56a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "[Upon his death bed,] Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the end of days, but *Shekhinah* departed from him [depriving him of inspiration]. He said, 'Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a blemish in my bed [i.e., someone unfit among my children], like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom issued Esau.' His sons answered him, '*Hear, O Israel!* [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—just as there is only *one* in your heart, so there is only *one* in our heart.' At that moment our father Jacob opened and exclaimed, 'Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!'" See *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 8:7, 112c; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 31, 312; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 4.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68. On Abraham being cast into the fiery furnace, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 38:13; Vol. 2, pp. 5–6, n. 34. On green as harmonizing between opposing divine qualities, see *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 1445; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot), par. 484. On Jacob as including the qualities of Abraham and Isaac, cf. *Zohar* 1:224b (Vol. 3, pp. 349–50, n. 260).

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Therefore, thus says YHVH, who redeemed Abraham, to the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face become white* [or: *grow pale*].

56. **Mystery of the holy Covenant is the letter י (*yod*)...** The mark of the covenant of circumcision is identified with the letter י (*yod*) of the divine name שד׳

(*Shaddai*), which is also the initial letter of יהוה (*YHVH*). The phrase "crowned with a supernal insignia" apparently refers to the tiny tip on the upper left-hand corner of the י (*yod*).

Since Phinehas "acted zealously for the covenant," by killing the fornicating couple Zimri and Cozbi, his name includes the letter י (*yod*): פינחס (*Pineḥas*). According to one tradition, in the spelling of Phinehas's name in Numbers 25:11, the י (*yod*) is written small. This small *yod* signifies *Shekhinah*, who is associated with all the small letters and (along with *Yesod*) represents the covenant. *Shekhinah* is pictured as the daughter of *Ḥokhmah*, the primordial point, who is Himself symbolized by the point-like letter י (*yod*).

On the letter י (*yod*) as the mark of circumcision, see *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 14, *Shemini* 8; *Zohar* 1:13a, 56a, 60a, 89a, 93a, 95a–b; 2:3b, 36a, 87b, 90a, 216b, 235a; 3:13b, 73a, 91a–b, 142a (*IR*), 220a, 256a (*RM*), 266a–b; Wolfson, "Circumcision and the Divine Name"; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 29–48. On the tip of the letter *yod*, see BT *Menaḥot* 34a.

On Phinehas's zealous act, see above, note 7. On the *yod* in פינחס (*Pineḥas*), see above, note 23. On the size of the *yod* in פינחס (*Pineḥas*) in Numbers 25:11, see *Zohar* 3:57b, 220a; Menaḥem Lonzano, *Shetei Yadot*, 20a–b; *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 25:11; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 25:11, n. 72. On *Shekhinah* and the small letters, see below, note 103. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

57. **Therefore he endures in complete vitality...** As mentioned previously (in note 33), Phinehas is identified with the prophet Elijah, who lived hundreds of years later and did not undergo the normal experience of death, but rather *ascended in a whirlwind to heaven* (2 Kings 2:11). Thus Phinehas (or Elijah) "endures in complete vitality..., not perishing [normally] from the world."

Rabbi Abba applies to Phinehas the verse from Job quoted above (by Rabbi Yehudah at note 51): *Remember, now: what* נקי (*naqi*), *innocent person, ever perished, and where were the upright obliterated?* Phinehas acted zealously when many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. Because he remained *naqi, innocent*, of that sin, and saved Israel from divine wrath, he (as Elijah) never perished normally.

58. ***And where were the upright obliterated?...*** The second half of the verse also pertains to Phinehas, because through his zealous action the souls of Nadab and Abihu were reincarnated in him and thereby restored, rather than being *obliterated* from the world above. See above, note 8.

59. **delving into this portion...** Namely, *Parashat Pineḥas*, the Torah portion *Phinehas*.

Rabbi El'azar had heard (perhaps from his father, Rabbi Shim'on) that the souls of Nadab and Abihu were reincarnated in Phinehas (as explained above, note 8), who "restored their place" by eventually serving as high priest. Rabbi El'azar wonders how this could be, since normally a person's soul is reincarnated only into someone born after the first person has died, whereas Phinehas was alive when Nadab and Abihu perished, and he possessed his own soul.

On Phinehas's status, cf. above, note 30. On the role of deputy high priest (or prefect), cf. BT *Zevaḥim* 102a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:3 (and parallels).

60. **When [Nadab and Abihu] departed from the world...** Since they had not engendered any children, their souls were unfulfilled and thus excluded from the realm of *Shekhinah* (pictured as "the holy Rock").

On diminishing the divine image, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 34:14, in the name of Ben Azzai: "Whoever abstains from procreation is as though he spilled blood and diminished the image." Because human beings are created in the

image of God, by failing to bring new life into the world, one diminishes the manifestation of that image.

See *Tosefta Yevamot* 8:7; BT *Yevamot* 63b; *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 8; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:2; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 10; *Zohar* 1:13a, 186b; 3:7a *ZḤ* 59a (*MhN*), 89b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 140; David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *The Book of Mirrors*, 28, and intro, p. 34, n. 238; Heschel, *Torah min ha-Shamayim*, 1:220–23.

On the connection between childlessness and reincarnation, see above, note 8. On the image of a rock in the context of reincarnation, cf. *Zohar* 2:100a. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Nadab and Abihu died before YHVH when they offered alien fire before YHVH in the Desert of Sinai, and they had no sons* [or: *children*], *and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father*.

61. **When Phinehas acted zealously…** By killing the fornicating couple Zimri and Cozbi. (See above, note 7.) According to Numbers 25:14, Zimri was a chieftain in the tribe of Simeon.

Due to his passionate zeal (and/or the fear of being attacked by the hordes of Zimri's fellow Simeonites), Phinehas's soul flew away from him. In the atmosphere, his soul encountered the two souls of Nadab and Abihu, who were wandering naked because they had departed this life childless and unfulfilled. All three souls merged, and soon Phinehas's soul returned to him mingled with the two others. Then "he attained their place," becoming destined for the high priesthood, whereas previously he was worthy only of being an ordinary priest.

A soul's nakedness implies that it lacks a garment of good deeds. See above, note 35; pp. 98–99, n. 140. Here, the word "naked" renders עריראן (*ariran*), based on the rare biblical term ערירי (*ariri*), which apparently means "stripped," hence, "stripped of children, childless." See Genesis 15:2;

Leviticus 20:20–21; Jeremiah 22:30; *Targum Onqelos* and Rashi on Leviticus 20:20.

On Phinehas's status, cf. above, note 30. On the particular type of (usually temporary) reincarnation known as עִבּוּר (*ibbur*), "impregnation," see above, note 8.

62. **So he was נקי (*naqi*), *innocent*...** Rabbi Shim'on applies to Phinehas the verse from Job: *Remember, now: what* נקי (*naqi*), *innocent person, ever perished, and where were the upright obliterated?* Because Phinehas remained *naqi, innocent*, of sin and acted zealously, his soul did not perish when it flew away from him. See above, note 57.

63. ***And where were the upright obliterated?...*** The second half of the verse also pertains to Phinehas, because through his zealous action the souls of Nadab and Abihu were reincarnated in him rather than being *obliterated*. Thereby, "what was lost in their lifetime"—namely the opportunity to have children, or to serve as high priests—"returned to the world." See above at note 58.

The verse in Numbers reads in full: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*. Of course, the simple sense of the beginning of this verse is that Phinehas was the *son of Eleazar*, who was the *son of Aaron*. But Rabbi Shim'on alludes to a deeper meaning: Since the souls of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were reincarnated in Phinehas, the latter was not only the *son of Eleazar*, but also, in a sense, the *son of Aaron*! See above, note 8.

64. **What is written before this portion?...** The previous Torah portion concludes with the account of the tragic incident when many Israelite men went *whoring with the daughters of Moab* (Numbers 25:1) and worshiped the heathen god Baal-peor. (See above, note 7.) Verse 4 reads in full: *YHVH said to the Moses, "Take all the leaders of the*

people and impale them to YHVH, facing the sun, that YHVH's flaring wrath turn away from Israel."

Rabbi Shim'on wonders why Scripture adds the detail *facing the sun*. He is alluding to a rabbinic rule about capital punishment. According to M *Sanhedrin* 4:1, capital cases must be tried during the daytime and the verdict must also be reached during the daytime. In BT *Sanhedrin* 34b, Rav Shimi son of Ḥiyya deduces this from the verse quoted here: *and impale them to YHVH, facing the sun*.

65. **On whatever rung a person sins…** Whichever sefirotic rung a person taints by his sin, precisely there he must mend his soul. By whoring with the Moabite women, the Israelites had sinned against the divine phallus, *Yesod*. This phallic *sefirah*—associated with the covenant of circumcision and called Holy Covenant—is symbolized by *the sun*. Consequently, the Israelite leaders were impaled *facing the sun*.

See *Zohar* 2:3b. On *Yesod* as sun, see also *Zohar* 1:9a, 33b; 2:3b, 137a; Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot*, 381; idem, *Shushan Edut*, 338; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 50 (61). On tainting *Yesod*, cf. Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 62–63.

66. ***The trees of YHVH drink their fill…*** The context in Psalms (104:14–17) reads: *He makes grass sprout* לבהמה (*la-behemah*), *for cattle* [or: *for the beast*], *herbage for the labor of humankind, to bring forth bread from the earth, and wine that gladdens the human heart—to make the face shine from oil* [or: *making the face shine brighter than oil*]*—and bread that sustains the human heart. The trees of YHVH drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon that He planted, where birds make their nest, the stork whose home is the junipers*.

Rabbi Ḥiyya asks what connection there is between *the trees* and *cedars* (mentioned in verse 16) and the *wine, oil*, and *bread* (mentioned in verse 15). He begins his answer by quoting verse 14, and posing another question: Why

would King David the Psalmist utter inspired words about something as mundane as *grass for the beast?* Because, Rabbi Ḥiyya explains, the countless blades of *grass* represent six hundred million angels, created on the second day of Creation, who flourish briefly, are suddenly cut down, and then sprout again.

According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:3 (and 3:8), Rabbi Yoḥanan taught that all the angels were created on the second day of Creation, whereas Rabbi Ḥanina taught that they were created on the fifth day. According to the *Zohar*, those angels created on the second day are angels of Judgment, deriving from *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—the second of the lower seven *sefirot* (pictured as the seven primordial Days). Characterized by strict Judgment, these angels perish daily.

On the notion of angels vanishing, see BT *Ḥagigah* 14a: "Shemu'el said to Rabbi Ḥiyya son of Rav, 'O son of a lion! Come, I will tell you one of those fine words said by your father: Every single day, ministering angels are created from a river of fire, chant song, and then cease to be, as is said: *New every morning, immense is Your faithfulness!* (Lamentations 3:23).'"

See *Zohar* 1:17b, 18b, 40a–b (*Heikh*); 2:213b–214a, 247a (*Heikh*); *Tosafot, Ḥagigah* 13b, s.v. *mi-zei'atan*; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 507, 510; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 65; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 202, 205 (and Wolfson's note 8); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:624–25.

67. **Therefore it is written: *He makes grass sprout…*** Now the verse implies that these numerous angels (pictured as *grass*) *sprout for Shekhinah*—pictured as a cosmic *beast* who consumes them daily.

The image of "a thousand mountains" appears in Psalms 50:10: *For Mine are all animals of the forest*, בהמות (*behemot*), *beasts, on a thousand mountains*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the apparent plural, *behemot*, is actually

singular. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “It is one beast, crouching on a thousand mountains—and a thousand mountains grow various kinds of vegetation for her, and she eats.” See above, p. 272, n. 79.

Here each of the thousand mountains yields—or constitutes—six hundred thousand angels, totaling six hundred million angels, consumed daily by *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Proverbs indicates that *Yesod* (called *righteous one*) *knows the soul of Shekhinah* (*his beast*) and provides Her with this daily sustenance. See *Zohar* 2:201a. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

68. ***Herbage for the service of* האדם (*ha-adam*), *the human*...** Whereas *grass* symbolizes angels, *herbage* symbolizes souls of the righteous, consumed by *Tif’eret*, who is pictured as האדם (*ha-adam*), *the* divine *human*, riding *Shekhinah* (*the beast*). *Shekhinah* is also the divine throne (described by the prophet Ezekiel), upon which *Adam* sits.

The souls of the righteous stimulate the union of *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, which conveys blessing and nourishment to the whole world. This nourishment—or *bread*—issues from *Shekhinah* (*the earth*). The phrase “the one who is well known” accounts for the definite article in the word *ha-adam, the human*.

The verse in Psalms reads: *Herbage* לעבודת האדם (*la-avodat ha-adam*), *for the labor of humankind* [understood here as: *for the service of the human*]. For the context in Psalms, see above, note 66.

The verse in Ezekiel, describing what lies above the angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings), reads in full: *Above the expanse over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire, image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a human being* [or: *a human*] *upon it above*.

69. ***And wine*—old wine...** The flow of emanation from *Binah*. See below, note 180.

70. ***That gladdens the heart of* אנוש (*enosh*), *a human being*...** Whereas in the previous verse האדם (*ha-adam*), *the human*, symbolizes *Tif'eret*, in this verse אנוש (*enosh*), *a human being*, symbolizes the chief angel, Metatron. He is often called נער (*na'ar*), "youth, lad, [heavenly] servant," and whenever he ages, he is rejuvenated. The verse in Psalms 103 now implies that Metatron flourishes again and again *like grass*.

On Metatron as *na'ar*, see above, pp. 5–6, n. 12. On his rejuvenation, see *Zohar* 1:162a, 179b, both of which quote Psalms 37:25: נער (*Na'ar*), *A youth, I was, and now I am old*. According to BT *Yevamot* 16b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, "This verse was spoken by the Prince of the World [namely Metatron]."

The verse in Psalms 104 reads *And wine that gladdens the human heart* [or: *the heart of a human being*]. See above, note 66. The full verse in Psalms 103 reads: *A human being—his days are like grass; like the bloom of the field, thus he blooms*.

71. ***To make faces shine*...** The verse reads: *To make* פנים (*panim*), *the face* [or: *faces*] *shine*. (See above, note 66.) Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya focuses on the plural sense.

The image of large and small faces derives from a Talmudic discussion of the cherubim. See BT *Sukkah* 5b: "Rabbi Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'We have learned that the face of the cherubim was no less than a hand-breadth....' What is a כרוב (*keruv*), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'כרביא (*Keravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רביא (*ravya*).' Abbaye said to him, 'If so, how do you explain the verse: *The face of one was the face of a cherub, and the face of the second the face of a human* (Ezekiel 10:14), seeing that [the faces of] a cherub and a human are the same?'—'A large face and a small face [i.e., *The face of a human* is large, while *the face of a cherub* is small].'"

Here, the "large" and "small" faces may refer to different aspects of the *sefirot*, or to a certain sefirotic face

(or faces) and an angelic face (or faces), perhaps (including) that of Metatron. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On the passage in BT *Sukkah*, see BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; Zohar 1:18b; 2:278a; 3:60b (Vol. 7, p. 393, n. 110), 274a; *TZ* 70, 129b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 105–19; 170, n. 65; Vol. 8, p. 324, n. 14. Cf. above, page 420, where Rabbi Shim'on and his son Rabbi El'azar are called "the Great (or Large) Face and the Small Face."

72. ***From oil…*** From the flow issuing out of *Binah*, who is described as the World that is Coming.

On the phrase *from oil*, see *Zohar* 1:240a. On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279.

73. ***And bread* [*that sustains*]…** Alluding to the heavenly bread, or manna.

According to a rabbinic tradition, manna is ground in heaven for the righteous in the afterlife. Here, "the skies" represent the heavenly *sefirot Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, which prepare nourishment for "the righteous, unspecified"—that is, not for righteous souls, but rather for *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, who are called "the righteous." From *Shekhinah*, the nourishing flow proceeds to numerous angels, who are pictured as *the heart of enosh*, that is, of Metatron.

On manna's being ground for the righteous in the afterlife, see BT *Ḥagigah* 12b; *Zohar* 3:26a, 128b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 35a. Cf. *Mekhilta, Vayassa* 4; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 16:25; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:8; Naḥmanides on Exodus 16:6; *Zohar* 2:63a.

On *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* as "the righteous," see Vol. 7, p. 167, n. 517. On the wording "for the righteous, unspecified," cf. *Zohar* 1:245b; 2:148b.

74. **supernal inner trees** Certain *sefirot*, as Rabbi Ḥiyya proceeds to explain.

75. ***The cedars of Lebanon…*** The *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*, which began as saplings within *Binah* and were

subsequently transplanted to their normal position below Her. Once they were replanted, they become known as *the trees of YHVH. Tif'eret* (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) is called the Tree of Life, while *Shekhinah* is called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The cedars of Lebanon are identified with their original source within the "fifty gates" of *Binah*. This latter image derives from a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*), understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

The image of five hundred years derives from a passage in *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:6, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Ila'i: "The Tree of Life extends over a journey of five hundred years, and all the waters of Creation branch off beneath it." See above, pp. 248–49, n. 10.

On the image of God uprooting and transplanting, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:1: "*YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden* (Genesis 2:8).... As is written: *The trees of YHVH drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon that He planted* (Psalms 104:16). Rabbi Ḥanina said, 'They resembled antennae of grasshoppers, and the blessed Holy One uprooted them, transplanting them in the Garden of Eden.'"

See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 504; *Zohar* 1:31a, 35a–b, 37a, 45b, 162b; 2:127b, 177a (*SdTs*); 3:4b; *Massekhet Atsilut*, 2. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

76. ***Where birds make their nest...*** Souls of the righteous nest in the shade of the sefirotic trees, and all the angels are nourished from there.

77. חסידה **(*Ḥasidah*), *The stork*...** Rabbi Ḥiyya associates this term with חסיד (*ḥasid*), "devout," and חסד (*ḥesed*), "kindness." *Shekhinah* is pictured as חסידה (*ḥasidah*), *the stork*, because She receives the flow of emanation from *Ḥesed*, who

is symbolized by Abraham the חסיד (*ḥasid*). So She is described as the daughter of Abraham.

On *Shekhinah* as the daughter of Abraham, see *Bahir* 52 (78); Vol. 4, p. 164, n. 87; cf. Vol. 5, pp. 5–6, n. 17. On Abraham as *ḥasid*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:4; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 18; *Vayera* 3; *Aggadat Bereshit* 46:3; *Zohar* 1:112b, 189b.

78. **between the arms of the world** Embraced by the two cosmic arms, *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*.

79. **rose to study Torah at midnight…** On this midnight ritual, see above, p. 3, n. 6.

Rabbi Ḥiyya had interpreted *enosh* (*a human being*) as referring to Metatron, who is renewed and rejuvenated again and again, flourishing *like grass*. (See above, note 70.) Now Rabbi Yose wants to know how "the conclusion" (i.e., the following verse) pertains to this chief angel.

The context in Psalms (103:15–17) reads: *A human being—his days are like grass; like the bloom of the field, thus he blooms. For* רוח (*ruaḥ*), *a wind* [or: *a spirit*], *passes by him and he is no more, and his place no longer knows him. But YHVH's kindness is* מעולם ועד עולם (*me-olam ve-ad olam*), *from everlasting to everlasting* [or: *forever and ever*], *over those who revere Him, and His salvation* [or: *righteousness, generosity, beneficence*] *to the children's children*. On verse 16, see above, p. 271, n. 76.

80. ***For* רוח *(ruaḥ), a spirit, passes by…*** Alluding to *Binah*, who is called "supernal spirit." She absorbs Metatron, *and he is no more*.

The verse in Genesis reads in full: *Enoch walked with God; and he was no more, for Elohim took him*. In postbiblical literature, this verse is taken to mean that God transported Enoch through the heavens and transformed him into the angel Metatron. According to Rabbi Abba, *Elohim* here refers to *Binah* (as often in the *Zohar*).

On Enoch-Metatron, see above, p. 276, n. 88. On *Binah* as "supernal spirit," see *Zohar* 2:238b.

81. **the small *spirit* is absorbed…** Metatron is absorbed by *Binah*.

82. ***But YHVH's kindness…*** The *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* (Love, or Kindness) is symbolized by the high priest. This divine quality enters the realm of *Binah* (here called "the Holy of Holies"), grasps Metatron, and rejuvenates him.

The clause "his juvenescence is renewed like the eagle's" is based on Psalms 103:5: *Your youth is renewed like the eagle's*. This verse alludes to the popular ancient belief that the eagle regains its youth when it molts or in old age. See Isaiah 40:31; and David Kimḥi, ad loc. Cf. the legend of the phoenix, the mythological bird who dies in a self-created fire every five-hundred-to-over-a-thousand years, burning into a pile of ashes, out of which a phoenix chick is born. See Vol. 7, p. 540, n. 567; above, p. 126 at n. 219.

On *Binah* as the Holy of Holies, see *Zohar* 2:238b–239b. For the full verse in Psalms, see above, note 79. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

83. **a shadow hovering over them…** The significance of this mysterious shadow will be clarified below.

84. **what happened to me with the Holy Lamp…** That is, with Rabbi Shim'on, who bears this title.

"The cleft of a certain rock" recalls *the cleft of the rock* where God revealed His *back* to Moses (Exodus 33:22–23). Similarly, here, a profound mystery is revealed: the suffering of the righteous.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68. On the valley (or plain) of Ono, see Nehemiah 6:2; *Zohar* 3:144b (*IR*). On escaping the intensity of the sun, see above at note 37.

85. **whenever the wicked proliferate…** Rabbi Abba is troubled by the notion that the righteous suffer for the wicked. Their suffering cannot be explained as a punishment for failing to reprimand the wicked, since often

such reprimands are not heeded, and furthermore the righteous rebukers “are overwhelmed” and silenced by the sinners. It also cannot be justified by the explanation that the death of the righteous leaves the world unprotected by their merit and vulnerable to heavenly punishment, since it would be better to keep the righteous alive and strike only the wicked, thereby enabling the righteous to celebrate the destruction of evildoers.

On virtuous people being seized for the sin of others, see BT *Shabbat* 33b (per Munich MS): “Rabbi Gorion (according to others, Rabbi Yosef son of Rabbi Shema’yah) said, ‘When there are righteous ones in the generation, the righteous are seized for the sin of the generation. When there are no righteous in the generation, schoolchildren are seized for the sin of the generation.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:6; *Kallah Rabbati* 6:4; Rashi on BT *Ta’anit* 11a, s.v. *ha-tsaddiq avad*; *Zohar* 1:67b–68a, 180a; 2:10b, 38b, 53a, 195a; 3:17b, 38a, 46b; *ZḤ* 12c–d (*MhN*). Cf. *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 18; BT *Shabbat* 55a, *Avodah Zarah* 4a.

On the grave consequences of not reprimanding sinners, see BT *Shabbat* 54b, in the name of Rav, Rabbi Ḥanina, Rabbi Yoḥanan (or Yonatan), and Rav Ḥaviva: “Whoever can protest against his household [for committing a sin] and does not, is seized for [the sins of] his household; [if he can protest] against his townspeople [and does not], he is seized for his townspeople; [if he can protest] against the whole world [and does not], he is seized for the whole world.” See Vol. 7, pp. 286–87, n. 95.

86. **in order to atone for the world…** Rabbi Shim’on explains that the suffering of the righteous atones for the sins of the world.

According to rabbinic tradition, “The death of the righteous atones.” See JT *Yoma* 1:1, 38b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:12; BT *Yoma* 42a, *Mo’ed Qatan* 28a; *Pesiqta de-Rav*

Kahana 26:11; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 10; *Zohar* 1:65a; 2:269a (*Heikh*); 3:56b, 231a.

87. **From all members of the body…** If a person is suffering illness, blood will be drawn (or "let") from one of his limbs in order to heal the whole body.

The analogy of bloodletting—as applied to the responsibility of an individual to his community—is borrowed from Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 3:19. See below at note 191. On bloodletting (or phlebotomy), see above, p. 360, n. 214. For other instances of the *Kuzari*'s influence in this section of the *Zohar*, see below, notes 93, 139–40, 165.

The word "members" renders שייפי (*shaiphei*)—singular, שייפא (*shaipha*)—a frequent Zoharic neologism. See above, p. 120, n. 203.

88. **He strikes one righteous person among them…** Who is pictured as the arm.

On the inhabitants of the world as "bodily members," see below, note 139. On the righteous person as "the arm," see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayeshev* 1; *Aggadat Bereshit* 58:1; *Nitsotsei Orot*. Cf. BT *Ḥullin* 89a.

The context in Isaiah (53:4–5) reads: *Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our pains that he endured—though we considered him plagued, stricken by God and afflicted. But he was pierced* [or: *wounded*] *for our sins, crushed for our iniquities; he bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his wound* [or: *slash*] *we were* [or: *are*] *healed*. This chapter of Isaiah was interpreted in Christianity as referring to Jesus. See Vol. 6, p. 208, n. 296.

89. **mystery of 'a righteous one who suffers'…** Such a devoted person preoccupies the demonic Other Side, who enjoys tormenting him and consequently ignores the rest of the world, leaving all its other inhabitants unharmed. Eventually, this "righteous one who suffers" will be rewarded.

On the other hand, when "a righteous one… prospers," this is because there is no need for him to suffer at the

hands of the Other Side in order to save the rest of the world, since God has decided that the world is undeserving of atonement.

On the theme of "a righteous one who prospers, a righteous one who suffers," see BT *Berakhot* 7a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: "*Please, let me know Your ways* (Exodus 33:13). [Moses] said before Him, 'Master of the Universe, why do some of the righteous prosper while others suffer? And why do some of the wicked prosper while others suffer?' He replied, 'Moses, a righteous one who prospers is righteous born of righteous; a righteous one who suffers is righteous born of wicked. A wicked one who prospers is wicked born of righteous; a wicked one who suffers is wicked born of wicked.'" See above, p. 107, n. 162.

On the Other Side's being preoccupied with a righteous person, see the midrashic and Zoharic teaching on Job (discussed in Vol. 8, pp. 147–48, n. 267) and *Zohar* 3:218a–b (*RM*). Job exemplifies a suffering virtuous person who is eventually rewarded. (See Job 42:12–17.) On the theme of preoccupying the Other Side, see also above, p. 436, n. 456.

90. **If they didn't live at the same time, fine...** If the righteous one who prospers and the righteous one who suffers lived at different times, then Rabbi Shim'on's explanation would be fine, since the former one prospers at a time when God does not seek atonement for the world, whereas the latter suffers at a time when God does seek atonement. But, in fact, both types of righteous people live simultaneously.

91. **One or two of them is enough...** By striking just one or two of the righteous, God ensures atonement for the whole generation, and the rest of the righteous are left unharmed.

92. **Once the people are healed...** Once their sins are expiated, the righteous are healed.

93. **when they study Torah, they sway back and forth…** The practice of swaying (during study or prayer) is discussed by various medieval authors. The passage here draws on the dialogue presented by Judah Halevi in his *Kuzari* 2:79–80: "The Khazar said, 'I will ask you: Do you know why the Jews sway when they read Hebrew?'

"The Companion replied, 'It has been said that this is in order to arouse the natural heat. But I think that… since many of them could read at the same time, it was possible for ten or more of them to gather over one book—this is why our books are large. And each one of the ten would have to bend down each time in order to read a word and then sit up—bending down and sitting up continually [enabling his fellow to do the same], since the book was on the ground. This was the original cause.

"'Eventually, this became a habit through seeing, witnessing, and imitating whom they saw, as is the nature of human beings. Among other peoples, each person reads his own book, either bringing it near his eyes or bringing himself near the book, as he wishes, without inconveniencing his fellow; and he does not need to bend down and sit up.'"

Rabbi Abba's wording here—"without having learned it from anyone in the world"—contrasts with Judah Halevi's phrasing: "Eventually, this became a habit through seeing, witnessing, and imitating…, as is the nature of human beings."

See Emden, *Zohorei Ya'bets*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:77. For other explanations of swaying during study (or prayer), see Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, p. 630; Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 17; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margaliot), 57 (and *Meqor Ḥesed*, ad loc.); *Ba'al ha-Turim*, Exodus 20:15; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 20:15, n. 449; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. For other instances of the *Kuzari*'s influence in this section of the *Zohar*, see above, note 87.

94. **By this matter alone…** Israel's swaying during study demonstrates the difference between their souls and those of other nations. Israel's souls derive from *Shekhinah* (pictured as "the holy burning Lamp"). When She is linked to *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Torah), Her light glitters continually, "not still for even an instant." Similarly, Israel cannot remain still. As soon as they engage in Torah, they are inflamed and sway continually.

Rabbi Shim'on's mystical explanation contrasts sharply with Judah Halevi's anthropological one (quoted in the preceding note). This new reason for swaying seems like a spiritualized converse of the one rejected by Halevi: "It has been said that this is in order to arouse the natural heat." Instead, Israel's constant swaying is aroused by spiritual heat.

The verse from Psalms implies that *Shekhinah* (known as *Elohim*) should never be silent and never cease singing to *Tif'eret*. See *Zohar* 1:77b, 86a–b, 178b; 2:140a, 256b (*Heikh*); *ZḤ* 85b (*MhN*, *Rut*). On the verse from Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:34b, 77b; 2:30a.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *The breath* [or: *life-breath, spirit, soul*] *of a human is the lamp of YHVH, searching all the inward chambers* [literally: *the chambers of the belly*].

95. ***You are human…*** Rabbi Shim'on's interpretation here derives from a quotation attributed to him in the Talmud. See BT *Yevamot* 60b–61a: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai used to say: '*You, My flock—flock of My pasture—are human* [*and I am Your God*] (Ezekiel 34:31). You are called *human*; Gentiles are not called *human*.'"

Whereas Israel's souls originate in "the holy burning Lamp" of *Shekhinah*, the souls of Gentiles "are from extinguished stubble," namely demonic sources. So the latter lack light and remain still when they read.

On the innate distinction between Jews and Gentiles, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1:27–47, 95, 102–11; 2:35–44. For

parallel medieval Christian views of the demonic nature of Jews, see Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*. On Rabbi Shim'on's statement in BT *Yevamot*, see Vol. 8, pp. 171–72, n. 332.

96. ***Sing to YHVH a new song...*** This verse (and its context) exemplify joy that focuses on God. For an example of Samael denouncing "selfish" joy, see *Zohar* 1:10b–11a.

97. **בעושיו (*Be-osav*), *With his Makers...*** The simple sense of this clause is *Israel will rejoice* בעושיו (*be-osav*), *with* [or: *in*] *its* [or: *his*] *Maker*. But Rabbi Abba reads *be-osav* hyperliterally: *with his Makers*. The apparent plural alludes to the three partners who "make" a human being: a man, a woman, and God. Similarly, God created the world along with three "artisans," namely heaven, water, and earth.

See BT *Qiddushin* 30b: "There are three partners in [the creation of] a human being: the blessed Holy One, his father, and his mother." Cf. BT *Niddah* 31a; *Zohar* 2:93a; 3:83a (*Piq*); *ZḤ* 16b (*MhN*), 49a, 56b.

The final clause ("and then resumed as before") is clarified in the following note. On the concluding two sentences (and the following passage), see *ZḤ* 16a–b (*MhN*); *Zohar* 3:238b (*RM*); cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:8 (and parallels); *ZḤ* 13a (*MhN*).

The verse in Genesis reads: *God said, "Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness."* For other interpretations of the plural form *Let us make*, see, e.g., above, p. 457, n. 526; Vol. 7, p. 209, nn. 2, 4; Vol. 8, pp. 169–70, n. 327.

The verse in Job (referring to the beast called Behemoth) is quoted here to demonstrate the normal form עושו (*oso*), *his Maker*. On the unusual singular form בעושיו (*be-osav*), see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 124k. On the plural sense of *be-osav*, see *Zohar* 3:23b.

98. **Three other days remained...** On each of which one of the three artisans produced another craft, thereby

resuming “as before,” that is, as on the first three days of Creation.

99. **I will be in partnership with you…** God Himself will generate the soul.

100. **so, too, afterward…** After Creation, in all instances of human conception and birth. On *be-osav* as *his Makers*, see above, note 97.

101. **Even if one’s father and mother have departed…** When a person whose parents have died celebrates a joyous event—for example, his son’s or daughter’s wedding—and includes God in the celebration, God brings the souls of his deceased parents from the Garden of Eden to participate.

In eastern European Jewish society, on the eve of a wedding it was customary for the bride or groom (whose parent [s] had passed away) to go to the grave (s) in order to invite him (or her or them) to the ceremony. See Scholem; cf. *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

102. **That shadow returned…** The shadow that they saw previously hovering over them and moving around the house. See above at note 83.

103. **I saw Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir…** In this same place, the venerable Rabbi Pinḥas had once discussed the significance of the spelling of the name of his namesake: פינחס (*Pineḥas*), *Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest*.

Rarely in the Torah scroll, certain letters are written large and others are written small. In the *Zohar*, the large letters are associated with *Binah* (known as the World that is Coming), whereas the small letters are associated with *Shekhinah* (the Lower World). According to one tradition, a small letter י (*yod*) appears in the name פינחס (*Pineḥas*) in Numbers 25:11. This alludes to *Shekhinah*, who (along with *Yesod*) represents the covenant, so She is called Covenant. “Since Phinehas acted zealously for this Covenant” by

killing the fornicating couple Zimri and Cozbi, his name includes one of *Shekhinah*'s small letters.

See above, note 56. On the large and small letters, see *Zohar* 1:3b, 159b; 2:132a–b, 174a, 180b, 205b, 228b; 3:2a, 53b; *ZḤ* 65d (*ShS*), 66c (*ShS*), 74c–d (*ShS*). On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279.

On Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, see above, pp. 418–19, n. 402. Fittingly, he features prominently in the *Zohar*'s commentary on *Parashat Pineḥas*.

On Phinehas's zealous act, see above, note 7. On Phinehas and the covenant, see the context in Numbers (25:11–13): *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal. Therefore say: I hereby grant him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of eternal* [or: *perpetual*] *priesthood in recompense for his acting zealously for his God and atoning for the Children of Israel*.

104. **This Covenant belongs to him...** *Shekhinah* (known as Covenant) is wedded to Moses, so how can She be given to Phinehas, without Moses' knowledge?

On Moses' intimacy with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:11b–12a; Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128; Vol. 8, p. 485, n. 81; above, pp. 257–58 at nn. 35–36. On the covenant's being given to Phinehas, see the passage in Numbers quoted at the end of the preceding note. On this *Zohar* passage, see *Zohar* 2:190a.

105. ***Phinehas son of Eleazar...*** For the context in Numbers, see above, end of note 103.

106. **who risked your life for Israel...** At the incident of the Golden Calf and in the aftermath of the negative report of the Israelite scouts. (See Exodus 32; Numbers 14.) Phinehas acted similarly in the affair of Baal-peor. See above, note 7.

Numbers 25:11 reads in full: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*.

107. **That your Bride...** Namely, *Shekhinah*. On *Shekhinah* as *the bride of Moses*, see Vol. 8, p. 485, n. 81.

108. ***Therefore say...*** It was actually Moses—not God—who was granting to Phinehas his *covenant of peace*, namely *Shekhinah*. For the full verse and context, see above, end of note 103.

109. **if you say that She was removed...** Although Moses shared *Shekhinah* with Phinehas, he did not thereby lose any of Her brilliance.

The simile of a lamp derives from a midrashic interpretation of how Moses' inspiration spread to the seventy elders (and similarly to his successor, Joshua) without itself being diminished, like a lamp lighting other lamps.

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 93; *Tanḥuma, Beha'alotekha* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beha'alotekha* 22; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:20, 15:19; Rashi, *Leqaḥ Tov*, and *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 11:17; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush Eser Sefirot*, 4a; idem, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 118; *Zohar* 2:86b; 3:288a (*IZ*); *TZ* 19, 40b; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 144–45. Cf. *Sifrei Zuta*, Numbers 27:20; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:15.

110. **That shade came...** The identity of the shadow (or shade, ghost, specter) now becomes clear: it is the disembodied spirit of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir. (See above, notes 83, 102.) On the association of "shadow" with the ethereal body, see Vol. 7, p. 264, n. 24.

111. **Any place in which a righteous person...** After a virtuous teacher has died, his soul revisits each place in which he offered a new interpretation of Torah. This principle applies especially when other righteous people

are present, innovating words of Torah—and all the more so in this case, where Rabbi Pinḥas's soul reappeared (as a shadow, or shade), since Rabbi Yose was conveying Rabbi Pinḥas's original teaching in Pinḥas's name.

See above at note 103. Cf. JT *Shabbat* 1:2, 3a (and parallels), in the name of Giddol: "Whoever quotes a tradition in the name of its originator should envision the latter as if he were standing in front of him. What is the basis for this? אך בצלם (*Akh be-tselem*), *Only in an image* [or: *in a shadow*], *does a human go about* (Psalms 39:7)." See Vol. 7, p. 264, n. 24; Vol. 8, pp. 117–18, n. 188.

112. **it is not written *Therefore say to him…*** The wording *Therefore say to him* could imply that Moses was commanded to convey God's assurance to Phinehas. Instead, the verse reads *Therefore say*, implying that Moses had to make this assurance himself, granting to Phinehas Moses' *covenant of peace* (namely *Shekhinah*). See above at note 108.

113. **He, too, opened…** Rabbi Abba also transmitted a teaching in the name of Rabbi Pinḥas. *Shekhinah* (pictured as a lamp) hovers above a person's head. See above, pp. 253–54, n. 24.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All that your hand finds to do, do with your power* [or: *All that your hand finds to do with your power, do*]*; for there is no doing or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, where you are going*. The term *Sheol* means "the netherworld; the abode of the dead." See above, pp. 180–83 at nn. 45–50.

The context in Numbers is the story of the scouts who are sent to the land of Canaan. When their slanderous report convinced the Israelites that it would be impossible to conquer the Land, God threatened to attack the people immediately. But Moses assuaged His wrath, and God then decreed that all Israelites above the age of twenty would eventually die in the desert before they could enter Canaan, except for the two virtuous scouts (Joshua and Caleb).

Moses' argument concludes as follows (Numbers 14:17–19): *Now, please, let the power of my Lord be great, as You have spoken, saying, "YHVH! Slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*] *and abounding in kindness, removing iniquity and transgression; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons, to the third and fourth generations." Forgive, please, the iniquity of this people through Your great kindness, and as You have borne with this people from Egypt until now*.

114. **whoever utters the response 'Amen…'** In the Kaddish prayer. By chanting this line powerfully, one stimulates *Shekhinah* ("that holy supernal *power*"), who thereby ascends toward Her beloved, *Tif'eret*.

On the effect of the response "Amen! May His great Name be blessed," see BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Whoever responds with all his power: 'Amen! May His great Name be blessed'—his [heavenly] decreed sentence is torn up." See *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*), 62b; 2:129b, 165b–166a; 3:285a–286a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 69–71.

115. **For in that *power* there is *doing*…** *Shekhinah* (the divine *power*) is manifested in the physical world, which is known as the World of Doing. This world is the culmination of Divine Thought. By striving to act virtuously in this world, a person stimulates and fulfills *Shekhinah*, who (as the final *sefirah*) can Herself be pictured as "the end of Thought."

In this and the following paragraphs, Rabbi Abba is alluding to the concept of three worlds (in ascending order): the World of Doing (the physical world), the World of Speech (the world of the Divine Chariot and the heavenly spheres), and the World of Thought (the realm of the *sefirot*). See Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 16–18; Scholem, *Le-Ḥeqer Qabbalat R. Yitsḥiq ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen*, 69.

116. **The world that depends on speech…** That is, the heavenly realms—which depend on *Shekhinah*, who conveys divine revelation and is known as Speech.

As mother of the bounded world, *Shekhinah* is the source of various numerical operations, or forms of *reckoning*; whereas in the higher sefirotic realms, unity prevails—and so numerical multiplicity is irrelevant. See *Zohar* 1:46b; 2:221b, 236b.

"Numerologies" (גימטריאות [*gimatriyya'ot*]) refers to the numerical values of the letters of the alphabet. "Intercalation" refers to the insertion of an additional day in a lunar month (to harmonize the month with the lunar cycle) or an additional month in a lunar year (to harmonize the lunar and solar years). All of these operations belong to *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the moon.

See M *Avot* 3:18, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Ḥisma: "[Laws concerning] bird offerings and commencements of the menstrual cycle are essential laws. Determining equinoxes and solstices, and גימטריאות (*gimatriyya'ot*), mathematical calculations, are פרפראות לחכמה (*parpera'ot la-ḥokhmah*), savories of wisdom." The term פרפרת (*parperet*) means "a savory dish before, during, or after the main meal; appetizer; dessert; accessory."

117. ***Or knowledge…*** The mysterious *sefirah* of *Da'at* (Knowledge) includes all six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*, which originate in Divine Thought.

118. ***Or wisdom…*** *Ḥokhmah*.

119. **All of these are included in that *power*…** As the final *sefirah, Shekhinah* (the divine *power*) includes within Herself both *knowledge* (which itself embraces the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) and *wisdom* (*Ḥokhmah*). She also commands the heavenly realms and all *reckoning*, as well as the earthly realm of *doing*. Such all-inclusiveness does not pertain to the demonic power, identified with *Sheol* and Hell.

A person should strive spiritually to enter the various aspects of *Shekhinah*; otherwise he will enter the demonic realm, Sheol. The full verse in Proverbs (describing the home of the seductive "strange woman") reads: *Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of Death*.

120. **do all inhabitants of the world go to Sheol?...** Even those who are relatively righteous must be cleansed momentarily in the River of Fire. However, the wicked who never even considered *teshuvah* remain in Hell permanently.

On being cleansed in the River of Fire, see above, p. 317, n. 64. On the fate of those who never considered *teshuvah*, see *Zohar* 2:150b (Vol. 5, pp. 375–76, n. 527); *ZḤ* 25b (*MhN*).

The full verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH puts to death and brings to life* [or: *and grants life, keeps alive*], *brings down to Sheol and raises up*. On this verse, see above, p. 182 at n. 48; p. 327 at nn. 103–5.

121. **Even the completely righteous...** They descend to Hell in order to redeem some of the wicked from there—namely those who did consider *teshuvah* but never managed to engage in it before they died.

The dramatic theme of the righteous person rescuing the wicked from Hell became prominent in later Jewish mysticism. Several scholars have suggested that it may be based on the Christian belief of the descent of Christ into Hell, an idea that is recorded in the 4th century C.E. and eventually found its way into the Apostles' Creed. Already in the Talmud (BT *Ḥagigah* 15b), Rabbi Yoḥanan delivers from Hell the soul of the heretic Elisha son of Avuyah.

See *ZḤ* 25b (*MhN*); *TZ* 32, 76b. Cf. *Zohar* 1:41a (*Heikh*); 2:150a–b (Vol. 5, pp. 374–75, nn. 524–26); Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:418, n. 118; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1425–26; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 158–59.

122. ***One by one to find*** חשבון **(*ḥeshbon*), *a reckoning...*** As explained above (note 116), *Shekhinah*

(symbolized by the moon) is the source of various numerical operations, or forms of *reckoning*. Now Rabbi Yose asks where specifically such reckonings are found within the realm of *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *See, this have I found, said Qohelet: one by one to find a reckoning* [or: *a conclusion of thought*].

123. **That shade rose...** The spirit of Rabbi Pinḥas. (See above, note 110.) The significance of the "eyes" is immediately clarified.

124. **a verse fell into his mouth...** Spontaneously, Rabbi Abba uttered a verse from Song of Songs describing the *eyes* of the female character, who represents *Shekhinah*. Her *eyes* derive from *Ḥokhmah*, and they are filled with various numerical calculations, eventually amounting to reckonings of the moon, stars, and constellations.

The phrase "the moon outside" designates the moon in the sky, which is "outside" the realm of *Shekhinah*, who is Herself called Moon.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your neck like an ivory tower; your eyes, pools* בחשבון (*be-ḥeshbon*), *in Heshbon, by the gate of* בת רבים (*bat rabbim*), *Bath Rabbim* [or: *the daughter of nobles*; *the city of nobles*; *the daughter of many*]. *Your nose like the tower of Lebanon, looking out toward Damascus*.

The fertile location *Heshbon* (in the Transjordan) is here interpreted according to its homonym: *ḥeshbon, reckoning*. (See *Zohar* 2:223a.) The phrase *the gate of bat rabbim* is apparently construed here as *the gate of the daughter of many*, alluding to the moon, surrounded by *many* stars and constellations.

The phrase "פרפראות (*parpera'ot*), savories, within supernal Wisdom" derives from M *Avot* 3:18: "[Laws concerning] bird offerings and commencements of the menstrual cycle are essential laws. Determining equinoxes and solstices, and גימטריאות (*gimatriyya'ot*), mathematical calculations, are

פרפראות לחכמה (*parpera'ot la-ḥokhmah*), savories of wisdom." See above, note 116.

On a verse falling into one's mouth (that is, being uttered spontaneously), see BT *Berakhot* 55b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "If one rises early and a verse falls into his mouth, this is a minor prophecy." See *Zohar* 2:61b.

125. **That holy pearl that was in your possession…** Namely, the teaching of Rabbi Pinḥas about Moses "granting" *Shekhinah* to Phinehas. (See above at notes 103–9.)

On possessing pearls of wisdom, see BT *Ḥagigah* 3a; *Zohar* 1:148b; 2:209a; *ZḤ* 10b (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Berakhot* 17a, *Sanhedrin* 50b, *Zevaḥim* 36b.

126. **the blessed Holy One persuaded Moses…** By telling him: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal* (Numbers 25:11).

Until Moses gave *Shekhinah* permission to go to Phinehas —and until God directed Moses to state explicitly that he was "granting" *Shekhinah* (known as *covenant*) to Phinehas— *Shekhinah* did not join Phinehas. See above at notes 103–8.

127. **From Righteous One of the world…** *Yesod* (known as Righteous One of the world) grants permission to His partner, *Shekhinah*, to be with righteous humans, whose virtuous conduct adorns Her. In fact, He "rejoices in this." Yet, *Shekhinah* does not abandon Her divine husband, as the verse in Esther implies: *In the evening she comes* (to Her divine husband), *and in the morning she returns* (to be with righteous humans).

The phrase "the arms of Her husband" refers to *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, who embrace *Shekhinah*. The verse in Esther describes the continual stream of maidens coming to King Ahasuerus in the contest to be crowned queen. The following verses describe Esther, so this verse, too, is

sometimes applied specifically to her and to the divine feminine whom she symbolizes, *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 1:106a, and especially 202b.

On the divine male's granting *Shekhinah* permission to be with humans (or Israel) on earth, see *Zohar* 2:135a. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. The full verse in Psalms reads: *The wicked one borrows and will not repay; the righteous one gives generously*.

128. ***I hereby give him…*** The verse reads: *I hereby give* [or: *grant*] *him My covenant of peace*. Now this implies that Moses presented Phinehas with *Shekhinah* (known as *covenant*)—just as *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) offers Her to righteous humans.

The concluding sentence paraphrases a Talmudic principle: "A gift presented on condition that it be returned is regarded as a valid gift," i.e., it is temporarily considered the property of the recipient. See BT *Sukkah* 41b, *Qiddushin* 6b, *Bava Batra* 137b. The *Zohar*'s wording here resembles that of Rashi's formulation in BT *Sukkah* 41b, s.v. *heḥeziru lo*. For the context of the verse in Numbers, see above, note 103.

129. **On account of this Covenant…** By virtue of receiving *Shekhinah* (known as Covenant), Phinehas became worthy of the high priesthood, since *Shekhinah* is embraced by the divine right arm, *Ḥesed*, which is associated with priesthood.

See above, notes 29–31. On the link between covenant and priesthood, see Numbers 25:12–13: *Therefore say: I hereby grant him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of eternal* [or: *perpetual*] *priesthood*.

130. **I remember something…** Perhaps Rabbi Abba's mention of the future Temple (at the end of the preceding paragraph) reminds him of the first challenge presented by the clever Gentile to Rabbi Eli'ezer (son of Hyrcanus),

which Rabbi Abba heard from “the Holy Lamp” (Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai).

According to the simple sense of the verse in Isaiah, the phrase *the two houses of Israel* refers to the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Here, the Gentile applies this to the First and Second Temples. Cf. *Zohar* 1:50b.

The verse in Haggai reads: *The glory of this latter* [or: *last*] *house will be greater than the first*. See *Zohar* 2:103a; *Nitsotsei Zohar*, ad loc., n. 6; *She’elot u-Tshuvot ha-Rashba*, 4:187; *Ateret Tsevi*. On Rabbi Shim’on’s title “the Holy Lamp,” see above, p. 27, n. 68.

131. **you don’t eat any animal…** The notion that the laws of kashrut are intended to promote health and fitness was championed by Maimonides in *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:48. See also BT *Shabbat* 86b (and parallels); Samuel ben Meir on Leviticus 11:3 (who cites “expert physicians”); Naḥmanides on Leviticus 11:9; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:718–19.

The phrase “that has not been slaughtered properly or is diseased or defective” renders the concise Hebrew וטרפה נבלה (*nevelah u-trefah*). The biblical term *nevelah* means literally “carcass,” referring to the body of an animal that has died of natural causes. (See Deuteronomy 14:21.) However, in rabbinic literature and here in the *Zohar, nevelah* refers as well to the carcass of an animal that has become unfit through improper slaughtering. The biblical term *terefah* means “torn,” referring to the flesh of an animal torn by beasts of prey. (See Exodus 22:30). However, in rabbinic literature and here in the *Zohar, terefah* refers as well to an animal afflicted with a severe organic disease or congenital defect.

132. **he turned into a heap of bones** On the destructive power of the rabbinic gaze, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 79:6; BT *Berakhot* 58a; *Shabbat* 33b–34a; *Bava Metsi’a* 59b, *Bava Batra* 75a, *Sanhedrin* 100a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:16; 18:5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 32, 149a; *Midrash*

Tehillim 87:2; *Eikhah Zuta* 1:43; *Zohar* 1:57b, 59a. Cf. 3:147b.

133. **I asked Elijah one day…** Rabbi Eli'ezer had posed these same questions to the prophet Elijah, who provided him with answers, which were originally given in response to similar questions raised in the Heavenly Academy. On this academy, see above, p. 54, n. 1.

134. **For when Israel came out of Egypt…** Rabbi Eli'ezer conveys the heavenly response to the first of the Gentile's three challenges.

God originally wanted to build a Heavenly Temple (or actually, two Temples) Himself for Israel. The full verse in Exodus reads: *You will bring them, You will plant them on the mount of Your heritage; a firm place for Your dwelling You fashioned, O YHVH; the sanctuary, O YHVH, Your hands firmly founded*.

In rabbinic literature this verse is interpreted as referring to both an earthly and a heavenly Temple. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:17; JT *Berakhot* 4:5, 8c; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:9; 4:3; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 7, *Pequdei* 1–3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 45; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:13.

135. **But because they angered Him…** Israel's sinful rebelliousness doomed them, and although their children eventually entered the Promised Land, this next generation imitated their parents' ways and did not deserve the Heavenly Temple. Since the Temple in Jerusalem was built "by human hands" (under King Solomon), it was inherently flawed and could not endure. Solomon himself recognized this, as demonstrated by the verse in Psalms.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *A song of ascents. Of Solomon. Unless YHVH builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless YHVH watches over the city, the watchman looks out in vain*. On the question of whether David or Solomon uttered this psalm, see Vol. 6, p. 295, n. 95.

136. **In the days of Ezra…** After the destruction of the First Temple, when many Israelite men married "foreign" women. (See Ezra 9–10.) Due to their sinfulness, this generation, too, did not deserve the Heavenly Temple, so they had to build the Second Temple themselves. Israel still awaits the final redemption, when God will bring down the Heavenly Temple (built by His own hands) and plant it in Jerusalem.

On God's building the Temple with His own hands and eventually bringing it down to earth at the end of days, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:17; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 15:17; *Tanḥuma, Noaḥ* 11; *Pequdei* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 17; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 31, 142b; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Psalms 848 (where God's everlasting Temple is contrasted with those built by Solomon and Ezra); Rashi on Exodus 15:17; idem, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 30a, s.v. *la tserikha*; *Sukkah* 41a, s.v. *i namei*; *Zohar* 1:114a (*MhN*), 183b; 2:59a–b, 108a–b; *Nitsotsei Orot*. Cf. Revelation 21:2; *Targum Yonatan*, Psalms 122:3; *Zohar* 2:240a–b; above, note 134.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *YHVH builds Jerusalem* [or: *Builder of Jerusalem is YHVH*]; *Israel's scattered ones He gathers in*.

137. **the First Temple and the Second Temple…** Namely, both original Heavenly Temples. (See above at note 134.) The First Temple corresponds to the concealed realm of *Binah*; the Second, to the more revealed realm of *Shekhinah*.

138. ***I Myself—declares YHVH…*** The full verse reads: *I Myself—declares YHVH—will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory inside her*.

139. **As for the other question, surely we are closer…** The Gentile's second challenge was: If Israel is closer to God, then why do they suffer so much? (See above, following note 130.)

Rabbi Eli'ezer's extended comparison of Israel to the heart, and the other nations to the limbs of the body,

derives from Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, 2:35–44. Cf. above, pp. 48–49, nn. 136–37; below at note 165; *Zohar* 3:119a–b. For other instances of the *Kuzari*'s influence in this section of the *Zohar*, see above, note 87. On the brain as king, see BT *Shabbat* 61a.

The statement "Therefore they are in the middle of the whole world" recalls rabbinic passages such as *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 10: "The land of Israel sits in the center of the world, Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel, the Temple in the center of Jerusalem, the Sanctuary in the center of the Temple, the Ark in the center of the Sanctuary, and in front of the Ark the Foundation Stone, from which the world was founded." See above, p. 49, n. 137.

140. **that Israel eats no animal…** The Gentile's third challenge was: If Israel is so careful about what they eat, then why are they so weak and unhealthy; whereas the Gentiles, who eat whatever they want, are vigorous and strong? (See above at note 131.)

Rabbi Eli'ezer's explanation is based on medieval physiology (deriving from Galen), according to which the liver receives the digested food and transforms it into "nutritive blood," some of which reaches the heart. Just as the heart requires the finest food (for its blood), so Israel (the heart of the world) requires the purest food. The other limbs must be strong enough to subsist on worse food (and blood), which explains why Gentiles (the other "limbs") are strong and eat just about anything.

See Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, 2:41; *Tosafot, Sotah* 5a, s.v. *adam*. On Galen's physiology, see Vol. 5, p. 393, n. 585.

141. **Rabbi Yose came…** And kissed the hands of Rabbi Abba, who had conveyed to him Rabbi Eli'ezer's teaching, which Rabbi Abba heard from Rabbi Shim'on. See above at note 130. On the concluding exclamation, see above, p. 114, n. 182.

142. ***The name of the slain Israelite man, who was slain…*** Rabbi Yitsḥak wonders why Scripture employs such

convoluted (“concealed”) wording and why it doesn’t name the hero, Phinehas, who boldly killed the fornicating couple, Zimri and Cozbi.

See above, note 7. The context in Numbers (25:14–15) reads: *The name of the slain Israelite man, who was slain with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, chieftain of a patriarchal house of the Simeonites. And the name of the woman who was slain, the Midianite, was Cozbi daughter of Zur, who was head of the leagues of patriarchal houses in Midian*.

143. **Since the blessed Holy One had elevated Phinehas…** And made him eligible for the high priesthood, He did not want to mention him explicitly in the context of killing Zimri. Such a violent act betrays the rung of *Ḥesed* (Love), with which all priests are linked. See above, note 31.

Earlier, when Phinehas actually killed the fornicating couple—before he had been elevated—his name is fittingly mentioned. The context in that passage (Numbers 25:7–8) reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest saw, and he rose from the midst of the community and took a spear in his hand. And he came after the Israelite man into the alcove and stabbed the two of them, the Israelite man and the woman, in her alcove* [or: *in her belly*], *and the plague was held back from the Children of Israel*.

Similarly, Phinehas’s name is omitted from the later verse about *the woman who was slain, the Midianite*. For the full verse, see the preceding note.

144. **Rabbi Shim’on was traveling from Cappadocia to Lydda…** Such a journey recurs frequently in the *Zohar* and usually includes an encounter with some interesting character.

The itinerary from Cappadocia in eastern Asia Minor to Lydda in Palestine may be intentionally fantastic. Alternatively, the author(s) may have imagined (or pretended) that Cappadocia was a Galilean village near Sepphoris, based on the phrase “Cappadocians of

Sepphoris" in JT *Shevi'it* 9:5, 39a. According to a dream interpretation in *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:12, Cappadocia is not far at all from Palestine. See Vol. 7, p. 202, n. 110.

The words "goading" and "they goaded" render respectively טענין (*ta'anin*) and טעינו (*te'inu*). See above, p. 250, n. 13.

145. **he must have smelled the scent of new faces...** In rabbinic literature, Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey is depicted as quite talented. See above, p. 418, n. 402.

146. ***Shekhinah* was coming to me...** According to rabbinic tradition, "whoever welcomes [literally: receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*." See *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro)* 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: "Rabbi Shemu'el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, '... Whoever welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'... Rabbi Yishma'el taught... 'One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* sometimes transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are called the face of *Shekhinah* "because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment and they are revealed" (2:163b).

Here, Rabbi Pinḥas realizes that his dream about *Shekhinah* was a prediction of his encounter with Rabbi Shim'on. The "great presents" that he dreamed about are the words of wisdom that Rabbi Shim'on will soon bestow. On the theme of "the face of *Shekhinah*" and on the divine nature of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, p. 426, n. 425.

147. **words of Torah require thirsting clarity** See BT *Eruvin* 65a: "Legal discussion requires צילותא (*tsiluta*), clarity, like a day of the north wind."

Here, "thirsting clarity" renders צחותא (*tsaḥuta*), which in Aramaic means "thirst," but in this case also conveys the sense of the Hebrew word צחות (*tsaḥut*), "clarity." See above, p. 456, n. 524.

148. **in the revival of the dead…** In this world, when a person dies, first his רוח (*ruaḥ*), "breath" or "spirit," leaves him, and afterward his body begins to decompose. However, in the revival of the dead "what is now first will then be last," that is, the *ruaḥ* will be restored last, after the entire body has been reconstituted.

This sequence of the revival is demonstrated by Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. The context there reads (Ezekiel 37:7–10): *I prophesied as I had been commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a sound and a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I saw, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh grew, and skin formed on them above; but there was no* רוח (*ruaḥ*) *breath, in them. He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath! Prophesy, O son of man, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord YHVH: From the four* רוחות (*ruḥot*), *winds, come,* הרוח (*ha-ruaḥ*), *O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live!" I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet, a vast force*.

On the wording "what is stripped off first…," see the passage from *Bereshit Rabbah* in the following note; Rashi on Ezekiel 37:6; *Tosafot, Niddah* 25a, s.v. *or u-vasar*.

149. **Concerning this the ancient ones disputed…** In rabbinic literature, the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai disagreed over the formation of the body in the revival of the dead.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:5: "The School of Shammai and the School of Hillel disagree. The School of Shammai says, 'His formation in the world that is coming is unlike that of this world. In this world [when the fetus is formed] it begins with the skin and flesh, and ends with the sinews and bones; but in the time to come [when the body is resurrected] it begins with the sinews and bones, and ends with the skin and flesh. For thus it says concerning the dead of Ezekiel: *I saw, and behold, there were sinews on them*

[i.e., on the bones], *and flesh grew*, [*and skin formed on them above*…] (Ezekiel 37:8).' Rabbi Yonatan said, 'We do not learn from the dead of Ezekiel. What did the dead of Ezekiel resemble? Someone who enters a bathhouse: what he takes off first he puts on last.'

"The School of Hillel says, 'Just as he is formed in this world, so is he formed in the world that is coming. In this world it begins with the skin and flesh, and ends with the sinews and bones last; so in the time to come it begins with the skin and flesh, and ends with the sinews and bones. For thus says Job: *Will You not pour me out like milk?* He does not say *Did You not pour me out?* He does not say [*Did You not*] *congeal me?* But rather [*Will You not*] *pour me out?* and [*Will You not*] *congeal me?* It is not written here *With skin and flesh You clothed me*, but rather *You will clothe me*. It is not written here *With bones and sinews You wove me*, but rather *You will weave me* (Job 10:10–11).'"

According to a hyperliteral reading of the verbs in Job, the future tense refers to the revival of the dead, when God will first clothe a person *with skin and flesh*, and then weave him *with bones and sinews*.

The phrase "that enduring bone" alludes to a rabbinic tradition, according to which God will resurrect humans from the vertebra at the base of the spinal column, which does not decompose in the grave. This bone, shaped like an almond, is called לוז (*luz*), "almond." The reference to "dough" derives from a related tradition in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Shim'on says, 'All bodies crumble into the dust of the earth until nothing remains except a spoonful of decayed matter. This mingles with the dust like leaven mixed with dough. In the time to come… it raises the entire body.'"

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 28:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:5; *Zohar* 1:69a, 113a (*MhN*), 116a (*MhN*), 126a (*MhN*), 137a (*MhN*); 2:28b; 3:169b, 270b;

Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 271; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 87–89.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:5, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:9. The context in Job (10:9–12) reads: *Remember, now, that like clay You worked me, and to dust You will return me. Did You not* [literally: *Will You not*] *pour me out like milk, and like cheese curdle* [or: *congeal*] *me? With skin and flesh You clothed me* [literally: *You will clothe me*], *with bones and sinews wove me* [literally: *weave me*]. *Life and kindness You granted me, and Your command* [or: *care, providence*] *preserved my spirit* [or: *Your command my spirit kept*].

150. ***Life and kindness You granted me…*** Alluding to the infusion of "רוחא (*ruḥa*), the spirit, of life."

One might object that the past tense—*You granted me*—refers to the original formation of the fetus, not the revival of the dead. Rabbi Shim'on agrees that this first part of the verse does apply to one's original existence "in this world." However, the continuation of the verse—ופקודתך שמרה רוחי (*u-phquddatekha shamerah ruḥi*), *and Your providence preserved my spirit*—implies that God intends לפקדא (*le-phaqqada*), "to entrust," the *spirit* to *Shekhinah*, who "preserves" it until the eventual resurrection.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For the context in Job, see the preceding note.

151. **All souls of the righteous are treasured away…** In the realm of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the Divine Throne.

The verse in Psalm 109 reads: *Let his days be few, may another man take* פקודתו (*pequddato*), *his post* [or: *office*]—understood here as *the one over whom he is appointed*, namely his wife. Rabbi Shim'on quotes this verse to demonstrate that פקודה (*pequddah*) can refer to "a wife," and so ופקודתך (*u-phquddatekha*), *and Your providence*, refers to the Divine Wife, *Shekhinah*, also known as *Matronita*.

On souls of the righteous being treasured away beneath the Divine Throne, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:5; BT *Shabbat* 152b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12. On *pequddato* in Psalm 109 as meaning "his wife," see Ibn Ezra and David Kimḥi, ad loc.; *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The full verse in Psalm 31 reads: *In Your hand I entrust* [or: *commend, commit, deposit*] *my spirit. You redeem me, YHVH, God of truth*. See above, p. 404, n. 358.

152. ***Preserve my soul, for I am faithful…*** This verse, too, alludes to *Shekhinah*, who preserves the souls of the *faithful*.

Rabbi Shim'on concludes by stating that when a biblical verb lacks a subject, the subject is assumed to be *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*). Thus, She is the subject of the verses quoted from Leviticus and Exodus.

On the verse in Leviticus, see *Zohar* 1:102b, 138a, 173b, 234b, 239a; 2:138a, 157a; 3:4b, 53b, 56a, 285a. On the verse in Exodus, see *Zohar* 2:60b. On the general principle, see also *Zohar* 1:115a, 142b, 144b; 2:125b, 131a.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Preserve my soul, for I am* חסיד (*ḥasid*), *faithful* [or: *devout*]. *Deliver Your servant who trusts in You—O You, my God*. Cf. above at notes 15–21. The full verse in Exodus reads: *He said, "If you really heed the voice of YHVH your God, and do what is right in His eyes, and hearken to His commands and keep all His statutes, all the sickness that I imposed upon Egypt I will not impose upon you, for I am YHVH your healer."*

153. ***Shekhinah* gave me presents and gifts…** In Rabbi Pinḥas's dream. These turned out to be the precious words of Rabbi Shim'on. See above at note 146.

154. **He said to him…** Rabbi Pinḥas still has a question, though. Granted, that from the one indestructible bone (at the base of the spinal column) God will eventually resurrect the human body. But what about all the other bones, which are in various states of decomposition? On the one eternal bone, see above, note 149.

155. **All of them will be included…** All the other bones (either decomposed or decomposing) will merge with the liquid dough of the everlasting bone, and out of this single dough the bodily form will be fashioned.

The verse from Isaiah now implies that God יחליץ (*yaḥalits*), *will withdraw, your bones*—divesting them of their independent existence and incorporating them into the indestructible bone.

On the image of dough, see above, note 149. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail*. See above, p. 121, n. 206.

The full verse in Hosea reads: *They will go with their sheep and cattle to seek YHVH, but they will not find Him*. מהם חלץ (*Ḥalats mehem*), *He has withdrawn from them*.

156. שמירה **(*Shemirah*), Keeping…** Following Rabbi Shim'on's discussion of the verse in Job—*Your providence* שמרה (*shamerah*), *preserved, my spirit* (above at notes 150–51)—Rabbi Pinḥas explores the significance of the root שמר (*shmr*), "to keep, guard, preserve."

Whereas emotions are "kept" in the heart, memories are stored in the brain. The human heart is modeled on *Shekhinah*, the Divine Heart, who keeps and protects Israel. The human brain is modeled on *Tif'eret*, pictured here as the Divine Brain.

In the first version of the Ten Commandments, the wording is: זכור (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to hallow it* (Exodus 20:8). The second version reads: שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep, the Sabbath day to hallow it* (Deuteronomy 5:12). For the kabbalist, *zakhor, remember*, suggests זכר (*zakhar*), "male," signifying the male divine potency (*Tif'eret* or *Yesod*), whereas the alternative formulation, *shamor, keep*, signifies the female, *Shekhinah*.

See BT *Berakhot* 20b; *Bahir* 124 (182); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 496–97; Naḥmanides on Exodus 20:8; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittaḥon*, 420; *Zohar* 1:5b, 47b, 48b, 164b, 199b, 248a; 2:70b, 91a, 92a–b, 92a–b (*Piq*), 138a, 165b, 182b; 3:81b, 92b (*Piq*), 115b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 118; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110; Wolfson, introduction to *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 63–71; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

157. **the heart controls… the liver…** According to medieval physiology, the liver supplies blood to the heart, thereby serving it, so "the heart controls… the liver." Whereas the brain and heart represent the divine couple (*Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*), the liver and its lobe represent the demonic couple, Samael and the serpent Lilith. In a sacrifice, the liver nourishes Samael, while the lobe of the liver nourishes the serpent Lilith.

For many sacrifices (including well-being offerings, purification offerings, and reparation offerings), the following parts of the animal were burnt on the altar: the fat around the entrails, the kidneys and their fat, and the lobe of the liver. (See, e.g., Leviticus 3:3–4.) Here, Rabbi Shim'on includes the liver itself. According to this passage, much of the sacrifice is intended for the demonic forces, in order to assuage them and prevent them from disturbing the communion between Israel and God.

On Samael and the serpent, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13: "Samael… took his band and descended and saw all the creatures created by the blessed Holy One. He determined that the most cunningly evil was the serpent, as is said: *Now, the serpent was slier than any creature of the field that YHVH Elohim had made* (Genesis 3:1). He [the serpent] looked like a camel, and he [Samael] mounted and rode him." See Vol. 6, p. 362, n. 296.

On the demonic share of the sacrifices, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:453–54, 3:890–95. On the general theme of assuaging demonic powers, see above, p. 436, n.

456. On the medieval physiology adopted here, see above, note 140.

158. **The liver obtains first…** When the sacrifice is offered, Samael and Lilith (symbolized by the liver and its lobe) receive sustenance first, along with their subordinate powers (symbolized by "all those veins of the liver"). Then *Shekhinah* (the heart) receives the spiritual element of the sacrifice, as immediately explained.

159. **The heart obtains nothing…** *Shekhinah* obtains nothing but the confession and prayer offered by the person bringing the sacrifice. She then conveys to *Tif'eret* (the brain) the pure intention of the priest (who aims to unify the *sefirot*) and the joyful singing of the Levites.

Tif'eret (the brain) derives from *Ḥokhmah* ("the supernal brain"). Finally, the purest element of the intention and song is offered to *Keter*, "the most concealed" realm of all.

160. **Veins of the liver…** These subordinate demonic forces are called here אישים (*ishim*), "personages" (or divine "agents"), a term that (according to Maimonides) refers to the tenth and lowest class of angels.

As explained above (note 157), the liver represents Samael, and its lobe represents Lilith. Now Rabbi Shim'on interprets יותרת (*yoteret*), "protuberance, lobe," as "excess." Lilith unites with her demonic partner only when she has "extra" time, after she seduces human males to sin. Cf. below at notes 205–7.

On the class of angels known as *ishim*, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:7. Cf. *Zohar* 1:70a (Vol. 1, p. 411, n. 522), 81a (*ST*), 164a–b; 2:43a; 3:110a (*RM*); *ZḤ* 6a (*MhN*); below at notes 248–49, 447–49; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:793.

161. **Furthermore, *yoteret*, excess…** At first, sin seems insignificant and inconsequential, but gradually it can dominate a person completely.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:6; BT *Sukkah* 52b, *Sanhedrin* 99b; *Zohar* 1:5a, 57a, 199a. On Lilith's adorning herself,

see especially *Zohar* 1:148a–b (*ST*).

162. **other smaller ones spread out…** Numerous minor demonic powers.

According to rabbinic law, sacrificial portions and fat that are not totally consumed by fire during the day can be burnt on the altar throughout the night. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that such nighttime offerings are intended to nourish the minor demonic forces. The concluding phrase means that all these forces are "included in" the realm of Samael (represented by "the liver"). On the sacrificial portions and fat, see above, p. 488, n. 629.

163. **The heart—essence of holiness…** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the heart) obtains the spiritual aspect of the offering and conveys it above. The two kidneys usually symbolize *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* (sometimes pictured as cherubim) who convey the flow of emanation toward *Shekhinah*; but here they may represent two angels, conveying the flow (or "counsel") from *Shekhinah* to the worlds below. The directions "right and left" symbolize *Ḥesed* and *Din*—the former drawing near and assisting a person, the latter distancing itself from him.

See *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:794. On the kidneys' giving counsel, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:4; BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:19. Cf. Psalms 16:7.

164. ***The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit…*** A person's genuine confession and *broken spirit* are an offering to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Elohim* and symbolized by the heart.

Once Samael (represented by the liver) is assuaged by receiving his share of the sacrifice, he is transformed from an accuser into an advocate, and conveys the person's confession and *broken spirit* to *Shekhinah*.

On the transformation of the demonic accuser into the advocate, see above, p. 437, n. 458. The full verse in Psalms reads: *The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn*. The full

verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *The dust returns* [or: *will return*] *to the earth, as it was, and the spirit returns* [or: *will return*] *to Elohim who gave it*.

165. **The heart is purest of all…** Cf. Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, 2:36–43; above, notes 139–40.

166. ***Trust in YHVH and do good…*** The directive *do good* implies that a person should perfect the rung of *Yesod*, who is called *good*, by preserving the covenant of circumcision—that is by proper sexual conduct. *Yesod*, the divine phallus, is identified with the covenant of circumcision. By living virtuously, one becomes distinguished and stimulates the flow of emanation, thereby nourishing *Shekhinah* (known as *faith*). See Vol. 8, pp. 214–15 and n. 20.

167. **by perfection of the covenant…** By guarding the covenant of circumcision through proper sexual behavior, a person perfects *Yesod*, the divine Covenant.

168. **Because Phinehas acted zealously…** When he killed the fornicating couple (Zimri and Cozbi), thereby assuaging God's wrath and protecting Israel. As a reward for his zealous deed, Phinehas was granted *a covenant of eternal priesthood*. (See above, note 7.)

Rabbi Shim'on construes the clause *Delight* על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *upon YHVH* hyperliterally: *Delight al YHVH, above YHVH*. Phinehas succeeded in attaining the rung of *Ḥesed* (or *Binah*), higher than *Tif'eret* (who is known as *YHVH*). This enabled him to shine with the primordial light, which is identified with *Ḥesed*. Both Abraham and Aaron are associated with *Ḥesed*.

On the primordial light, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7 (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon): "With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, a person could gaze and see from one end of the world to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the corruption of the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood, He hid it away from them, as is written: *The light of the wicked is withheld* (Job 38:15). Where did He hide it? In the

Garden of Eden: *Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright in heart* (Psalms 97:11)." See above, pp. 321–22, n. 79.

On the hyperliteral reading *above YHVH*, see *Zohar* 1:216a, 219a; 2:50b, 83a, 88a–b, 155b; 3:67b–68a, 70b, 94b, 288b (*IZ*).

169. **Having ascended to the high priesthood…** Since Phinehas was assured that he and his descendants would serve as high priests, his name is not mentioned in the verses that identify the fornicating couple whom he killed (Zimri and Cozbi). The reason for this omission is that such a violent act betrays the rung of *Ḥesed* (Love) on the right, with which all priests are linked, and entangles the perpetrator in "the branches of the (demonic) Other Side" on the left. See above, notes 142–43.

170. **you and your devotion…** On the association of Rabbi Pinḥas with חסידות (*ḥasidut*), "devotion, piety," see above, pp. 422–23, n. 416.

171. ***When he saw them, Jacob said, 'This is a camp of God!'*** The context in Genesis (32:2–3) reads: *Jacob went on his way, and angels* [or: *messengers*] *of God encountered him. When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is a camp of God!" And he named that place* מחנים (*Maḥanayim*), *Double Camps*.

Here, Rabbi Pinḥas applies the verse to his seeing Rabbi Shim'on along with the latter's son, Rabbi El'azar.

172. ***Jacob went on his way, and angels of God encountered him…*** Rabbi El'azar indicates that the verb ויפגעו (*va-yiphge'u*), *and they encountered*, could imply various things.

The earlier verse in Genesis (28:11), describing Jacob's journey to Haran, reads in full: ויפגע במקום (*Va-yiphga ba-maqom*), *He encountered a certain place* [literally: *the place*], *and spent the night there, for the sun had set, and he took one of the stones of the place and put it at his head and lay down in that place*.

The verb פגע (*pg'*) can mean not only "to meet, encounter," but also "to assault" and "to entreat." According to a rabbinic interpretation, the clause *va-yiphga ba-maqom* in Genesis implies that Jacob *entreated* God (who is known as המקום [*ha-maqom*], "the place," emphasizing divine immanence and omnipresence). Here, Rabbi El'azar identifies the *maqom* (*place*) with *Shekhinah* (the Divine Presence), to whom Jacob offered his prayer. Since *Shekhinah* is associated with night, Jacob fittingly offered the evening prayer to Her.

The context of the verse in Exodus is God's revelation to Moses in *the cleft of the rock* (Exodus 33:22). Here, Rabbi El'azar apparently interprets *there is maqom, a place, by Me* as implying that *Shekhinah* (called *maqom*) is *by Me*—that is, together with *Tif'eret*. On this verse, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9 (and parallels).

On the midrashic reading of *va-yiphga ba-maqom*, see *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:10; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 28:11; JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a–b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9; BT *Berakhot* 26b, *Sanhedrin* 95b; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 5; *Miqqets* 9, *Beshallaḥ* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 4; *Midrash Tehillim* 55:2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:1; *Zohar* 1:49a–b, 148b, 165a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 67.

173. **Further, *Va-yiphga, He entreated…*** Implying soothing speech. Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret* (pictured as the sun), who approaches His beloved *Shekhinah* (the moon) and speaks gently to Her, coaxing Her.

Conversely, years later, when Jacob was returning from Haran, *Shekhinah* coaxed him via Her angelic messengers, which is why Scripture reads there: *Jacob went on his way*, ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלהים (*va-yiphge'u vo mal'akhei Elohim*), which is construed now as *and angels of God entreated him*.

The clause "for the holy sun came" plays on the wording in Genesis 28:11: *He encountered a certain place and spent*

the night there, for the sun בא (*va*), *had set* [literally: *had come*, or *had entered*].

On the interpretation of *va-yiphge'u vo* as *they entreated him*, see *Zohar* 1:165a; 3:55b. On coaxing one's wife, see BT *Eruvin* 100b. For the context in Genesis 32, see above, note 171.

174. ***This is a camp of Elohim…*** The phrase *a camp of Elohim* refers to the nighttime angels accompanying *Shekhinah*, who is associated with night and called *Elohim*. The word זה (*zeh*), *this*, is masculine, referring here to the daytime angels accompanying *Tif'eret*, who is associated with day.

Rabbi El'azar then refers to Rabbi Shim'on and Rabbi Pinḥas (and their respective companions) as "holy camps."

See *Zohar* 1:165a–b; 3:55b. On the two camps of angels, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 74:17; 75:10; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:1; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlaḥ* 3, *Vayeshev* 2; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 32:3; Rashi on Genesis 32:3. On *zeh* as signifying the divine male, see above, pp. 194–95, n. 26. For the context in Genesis, see above, note 171.

175. **Whoever recites *A praise of David…*** According to BT *Berakhot* 4b, "Rabbi El'azar son of Avina said, 'Whoever recites *A praise of David* three times daily is assured of being a son of [that is, "a member of," or "admitted to"] the world that is coming.' What is the reason?… Because it includes the verse *Opening Your hand* [*and satisfying the desire of every living thing*] (Psalms 145:16)."

Here, Rabbi El'azar questions this Talmudic explanation. If the reason for reciting this psalm is because it mentions divine sustenance, then why is it recited three times daily, when actually God provides food twice a day (as demonstrated by the verse in Exodus). He explains that the third time is intended to empower *Shekhinah*, "whose hands are open" to nourish the world.

On the Talmudic passage, see *Zohar* 3:119b–120a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 64–65, 85. In the verse from Exodus, the *meat* and *bread* refer respectively to the quail and manna that God is about to provide miraculously to the grumbling Israelites. That verse reads slightly differently than how it is quoted here: *and your fill of bread in the morning*. For the context of the verse in Psalms, see the following note.

176. **These two types of food…** Humanity is provided with two different types of food. Both of these are conveyed by *Shekhinah*'s open hands.

The context in Psalms (145:15–16) reads: *The eyes of all look in hope to You, and You give them their food in its season* [or: *in its proper time*], *opening Your hand and satisfying* רצון (*ratson*), *the desire* [or: *wish, will*], *of every living thing*. The concluding clause can also be rendered: *and satisfying every living thing ratson, with favor* [or: *according to Your will*]. Alter renders it: *and sating to their pleasure all living things*.

177. **it is only twice a day…** The essential requirement is to recite this psalm (*A praise of David*) twice daily: following the *Amidah* of the morning service and at the beginning of the afternoon service. The same psalm is recited a third time in the early part of the morning service, known as *Pesuqei de-Zimra* (Verses of Song), which consists almost entirely of psalms (traditionally ascribed to King David). This initial recital is intended purely as praise for God, and not as a request for sustenance, since one should make such a request only after offering the main prayer: the *Amidah*, which stimulates the flow of emanation and actually nourishes God Himself.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked* [or: *gathered*] *my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* According to a

midrashic interpretation, this verse is spoken by God to Israel (His *bride*), and it refers to the Tabernacle (*my garden*) and the incense, sacrifices, and libations. See above, pp. 431–32, n. 440.

178. **the prayer recited seated** This section of the morning service (which includes the *Shema*) follows *Pesuqei de-Zimra* (Verses of Song) and precedes the central prayer, which is recited standing and known as *Amidah* (Standing).

179. **יערי (*ya'ri*), *my honeycomb*...** Rabbi El'azar plays on two meanings of the word יער (*ya'ar*), "honeycomb" and "forest." Here the "forest of Lebanon" includes various liturgical passages included in "the prayer recited seated," including the blessing to God "who forms light," the references to the angels known as *ophanim* (wheels) and *ḥayyot* (living beings), and one of the phrases describing angels: "all of them holy." Each angel is pictured as a tree or sapling in the heavenly forest.

The phrase "forest of Lebanon" derives from the description of a royal structure built by King Solomon. See 1 Kings 7:2: *He built* בית יער לבנון (*beit ya'ar levanon*), *the Lebanon Forest House* [or: *the House of the Forest of Lebanon*], so called because of the rows of Lebanon cedar it contained.

180. **the prayer recited standing...** The central prayer, the *Amidah* (Standing). By reciting this prayer with devotion, one stimulates the flow from *Binah*, pictured as "preserved wine." The phrase "the first three" refers to the first three blessings of the *Amidah*, which may symbolize *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who receive the flow from *Binah*.

The image of preserved wine recalls a description in BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi) of the world that is coming, when the righteous will enjoy "wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation." In the *Zohar*, this wine often symbolizes the vintage emanation stored within (and flowing from) *Binah*, who is Herself called "the World that is Coming."

See *Zohar* 1:135b (*MhN*), 192a, 238b; 2:147a, 169b; 3:4a, 12b, 39b–40a, 93b, 100a (*Piq*); *ZḤ* 28a–b, 64c (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 130, 319. On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279. On the significance of the first three blessings, see *Zohar* 2:200b.

181. **the last three blessings…** Of the *Amidah*, which may symbolize *Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*. See *Zohar* 2:200b.

182. **Until here, food of the King…** The recitation of the *Amidah* stimulates the flow of emanation, sustaining God Himself and unifying *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. Afterward, the heavenly angels are invited to *eat*, and Israel below is invited to *drink*. On the conclusion of the verse (*Eat, companions…*), see *Zohar* 1:248a; 3:4a, 7a–b, 241a–b.

183. **there is no obligation [to pray] for food…** That is, there is no obligation to recite Psalm 145 (*A praise of David*)—which includes the verses pertaining to food—until after the *Amidah*, which nourishes God Himself. See above, notes 177, 182.

But if so, why in *minḥah* (the afternoon service) is this psalm recited right at the beginning, before the *Amidah*? Rabbi El'azar explains that since harsh Judgment prevails as *minḥah* progresses, one should recite *A praise of David* right away, while the divine countenance is still beaming joyously.

The phrase "this arrangement of food" refers to Psalms 145:15–16: *The eyes of all look in hope to You, and You give them their food in its proper time, opening Your hand and satisfying every living thing according to Your will*. See above, note 176. On the association of the time of *minḥah* with Judgment, see above, p. 1, n. 3.

184. **Wherever it is written *Va-yhi, It happened*…** The word ויהי (*Va-yhi*), *It happened*, is read as וי היה (*vai hayah*), "there was woe," or וי הי (*vai, hi*), "woe, wailing."

See BT *Megillah* 10b: "Rabbi Levi, or some say Rabbi Yonatan, said, 'This matter is a tradition handed down to us from the Men of the Great Assembly: Wherever it is said: ויהי

(*Va-yhi*), *It happened*, this denotes suffering.'… Rav Ashi said, '*Va-yhi, It happened*, sometimes denotes this and sometimes not, while ויהי בימי (*Va-yhi bi-ymei*), *It happened in the days of*, always denotes suffering.'" See *Bereshit Rabbah* 41:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7; BT *Megillah* 11a; *Zohar* 1:16b, 119b; 2:140b, 167a; *ZḤ* 77a (*MhN, Rut*).

Here, following a rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on interprets the wording in Job—ויהי היום (*Va-yhi ha-yom*), *It happened on the day*—as referring to Rosh Hashanah, "the Day of Judgment." Similarly, *the day* mentioned in Kings, on which the prophet Elisha visited the Shunammite woman, was Rosh Hashanah.

On *the day* in Job, see *Targum Yonatan* on the verse; *Midrash Iyyov* 1:6 (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:158); Rashi and Ibn Ezra on the verse; *Zohar* 2:32b; *ZḤ* 20b (*MhN*). On the same interpretation of *the day* in 2 Kings 4:11 (several verses after the verse quoted here), see *Zohar* 1:69b, 160b; 2:32b, 44a.

The full verse in Job reads: ויהי היום (*Va-yhi ha-yom*), *It happened one day* [literally: *on the day*], *that the sons of Elohim came to present themselves before YHVH, and the Adversary* [or: *Satan*], *too, came among them*.

The full verse in Kings reads: ויהי היום (*Va-yhi ha-yom*), *It happened one day* [literally: *on the day*], *that Elisha was passing through Shunem, and there was a wealthy woman there. And she urged him to break bread, and so, whenever he passed through, he would turn aside there to break bread*.

185. **There are always two days…** In the Diaspora, Jewish communities celebrate the festivals for an extra day. However, for Rosh Hashanah, even the communities in Israel observe the additional day.

Rosh Hashanah represents *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. If the festival were celebrated for just one day, the quality of strict Judgment would be unbearable. The extra day enables Judgment to be balanced by Compassion.

On the two days of Rosh Hashanah, see Vital; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1298; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 47–48; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 114.

The concluding sentence (about the two occurrences of *va-yhi ha-yom, It happened on the day*) apparently refers to 2 Kings 4:8 and Job 1:6, though possibly to 2 Kings 4:8 and 11, or to Job 1:6 and 2:1, or to both of the double occurrences in Kings and Job. Job 2:1 is nearly identical to Job 1:6: *It happened one day* [literally: *on the day*], *that the sons of Elohim came to present themselves before YHVH, and the Adversary* [or: *Satan*], *too, came among them to present himself before YHVH*.

186. ***The sons of Elohim came…*** The name *Elohim* designates *Din* (Judgment). In the verse from Job, *the sons of Elohim* alludes to the members of the heavenly court, who derive from *Din*. For the full verse in Job, see above, note 184.

187. ***To present themselves* על יהוה *(al YHVH), over YHVH…*** The verse reads: *The sons of Elohim came to present themselves* על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *before YHVH*. Here Rabbi Shim'on reads the phrase *al YHVH* hyperliterally: *over YHVH*, which he interprets to mean that the heavenly court watches *over YHVH*, making sure that His Name is not profaned. For the full verse in Job, see above, note 184.

188. ***And Satan, too…*** According to a rabbinic hermeneutical rule, the word גם (*gam*), "too, also," amplifies the meaning of an adjacent word or phrase. In this case, *and Satan, too*, includes the demonic female, Lilith.

The phrase *over YHVH* again implies concern *over YHVH* and His honor. According to Job 1:9–11, Satan expressed this concern: *Satan* [or: *The adversary*] *answered YHVH, saying, "Does Job revere God for nothing? Have You not hedged him round—him and his household and all that he has? The work of his hands You have blessed, and his flocks have spread over the land. But just stretch out Your hand*

and strike all that he has. Will he not curse You to Your face?" For the full text of Job 1:6 and 2:1, see above, notes 184–85.

189. **Here the ancient pillars of the world were divided…** According to BT *Bava Batra* 15a–b, the sages differed as to whether Job was a Jew or a Gentile. On the suffering of the righteous as atoning for the sins of the world, see above, note 86.

190. **Rav Hamnuna encountered Elijah…** And quoted to him the Talmudic passage about the suffering of the righteous. See BT *Berakhot* 7a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: "*Please, let me know Your ways* (Exodus 33:13). [Moses] said before Him, 'Master of the Universe, why do some of the righteous prosper while others suffer? And why do some of the wicked prosper while others suffer?' He replied, 'Moses, a righteous one who prospers is righteous born of righteous; a righteous one who suffers is righteous born of wicked. A wicked one who prospers is wicked born of righteous; a wicked one who suffers is wicked born of wicked.'"

See above, note 89. On the figure of Rav Hamnuna, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

191. **when the blessed Holy One desires to purge the sins of the people…** By striking the righteous (who represent the arm of the nation), God purges all their sins. This resembles a physician who draws (or "lets") blood from a person's arm in order to heal the whole body.

See above, notes 87–88. The context in Isaiah (53:4–5) reads: *Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our pains that he endured—though we considered him plagued, stricken by God and afflicted. But he was pierced* [or: *wounded*] *for our sins, crushed for our iniquities; he bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his wound* [or: *slash*] *we were healed*.

192. **On that day…** On Rosh Hashanah, seventy thrones are set for the seventy princes of the heavenly

court.

On the need to confess and specify one's sins, see above, p. 375, n. 264. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 34b, *Sotah* 7b; *Zohar* 2:186a; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

193. **How do we know this?...** Namely, that one should confess and specify his sins.

The context in Exodus (32:31–32) reads: *Moses returned to YHVH and said, "Please, this people has committed a great sin, they made themselves gods of gold. Now, if You would only bear their sin! And if not, wipe me out, please, from Your book that You have written!"*

The full verse in Samuel reads: *They cried out to YHVH and said, "We have sinned, for we have forsaken YHVH and served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth. Now, save us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You."*

194. **This applies to an individual...** From the verse in Psalms, one could conclude that only an individual needs to confess, but the verse in Samuel demonstrates that the whole people should declare *We have sinned*.

Furthermore, the verse in Exodus demonstrates that not only the community but their representative can and should confess. This pertains not only to Moses or another political leader, but also to the person leading prayers, who chants the communal confession.

195. **a person is considered his own relative...** And one's relative is not allowed to testify against him. See BT *Sanhedrin* 9b, in the name of Rava: "A person is considered his own relative, and no one can incriminate himself." See *Sanhedrin* 10a, 25a; *Yevamot 25b*.

196. **One should anticipate by declaring his own defect...** Compare the proverb quoted in *Bava Qamma* 92b: "If there is something disgraceful within you, be the first to tell it." The full verse in Proverbs reads: *One who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but one who admits and leaves off will be granted mercy.*

197. **before wrath increases** Due to the many sins of the world. See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 8b, 16a; *Avodah Zarah* 2b.

198. ***day after day…*** Alluding to the two days of Rosh Hashanah. These two days correspond respectively to *Din* (Judgment), which is strict, and *Shekhinah*, which is lenient.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:3; *Zohar* 1:137a, 180a, 201a. The full verse in Kings reads: *May these words that I pleaded before YHVH be near YHVH our God day and night, for the doing of justice for His servant and justice for His people Israel day after day*.

199. **these Babylonians do not know the mystery…** According to the Babylonian Talmud, there was uncertainty regarding the exact sound of the shofar called תרועה (*teru'ah*), "blast" or "alarm." Does this sound resemble an extended broken sigh—known as שברים (*shevarim*), three "broken sounds"—or a series of short piercing cries? Rabbi Abbahu of Caesarea resolved the problem by prescribing both sounds.

Here (drawing on the Talmudic discussion), *shevarim* is called יבבא (*yevava*), "moaning," whereas the piercing sounds (of *teru'ah*) are called ילולותא (*yelaluta*), "wailing." Rabbi Shim'on explains that *yelaluta* refers to the strict Judgment of *Din*, and *yevava* refers to the lenient (or weak) Judgment of *Shekhinah*. Whereas the ruling in the Babylonian Talmud is based on a lack of knowledge, Rabbi Shim'on's explanation conveys profound wisdom.

The criticism of "the Babylonians" is undeserved, since Rabbi Abbahu was from Caesarea in Palestine. On the *Zohar*'s attitude toward "the Babylonians," see *Zohar* 1:96b, 224b–225a; 3:71b, 259a; Liebes, "Ziqqat ha-Zohar le-Erets Yisra'el," 35–36.

On the Talmudic (and post-Talmudic) discussion of *teru'ah*, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 33b–34a; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1301; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 46–47; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 113–

15. On the various sounds of the shofar, see Vol. 8, pp. 134–35, n. 234. On the significance of these sounds, see *Zohar* 3:18a, 99b–100b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1243–46.

200. ***Blast the shofar on the new moon…*** The moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, known as "the court of lenient Judgment."

According to the Masoretic text, the verse continues: בכסה (*ba-keseh*), *for our festival day*. The rare word *ba-keseh* is often understood as referring to the full moon, but in rabbinic literature it is derived from the root כסה (*ksh*), "to cover," and applies to the new moon (specifically, the new moon of Tishrei), when the moon is almost totally concealed. Here (as in some biblical manuscripts and occasionally in rabbinic literature), the word is spelled בכסא (*ba-kese*).

On the word *ba-keseh*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:6; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 8a–b, 34a; *Beitsah* 16a; *Sanhedrin* 11b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:6; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 7; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 39, 166a; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:5; *Zohar* 1:114b; 2:184a; 3:98b–99a, 98b–99a (*Piq*), 100b, 275a. Cf. Proverbs 7:20.

201. ***Ba-kese*—כס (*kes*), throne…** The spelling בכסא (*ba-kese*) suggests כסא (*kisse*)—or כס (*kes*)—"throne." The *sefirah* of *Din* (strict "Judgment") is pictured as a throne for *Binah*, who is both "the upper world" and "the supernal King." *Din* is symbolized by Isaac and referred to here by the divine name "Fear of Isaac." Whereas the strict Judgment of *Din* is concealed, the lenient (and bearable) Judgment of *Shekhinah* is (relatively) revealed. On the name "Fear of Isaac," see Genesis 31:42, 53.

202. ***For* חק (*ḥoq*), *a statute…*** The full verse reads: *For it is* חק (*ḥoq*), *a statute, for Israel*, משפט (*mishpat*), *a law, of the God of Jacob*. The synonyms *ḥoq* and *mishpat* allude, respectively, to *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. The latter assuages the strict Judgment of *Din* with its own quality of Compassion. See *Zohar* 3:113a.

The divine couple unites, so “both of them are as one.” The first day of Rosh Hashanah is characterized by the strict Judgment of *Din*, whereas the second is characterized by the lenient Judgment of *Shekhinah*.

203. ***Happy the people who know* תרועה (*teru’ah*), *the blast*…** Whereas the Babylonians do not understand the precise meaning and deep significance of *teru’ah*, the sages in the land of Israel are enlightened by its holy air and know the “mystery of *teru’ah*,” which they convey to *the people*.

Rabbi Shim’on associates *teru’ah*, *blast*, with the root רעע (*r' '*), “to smash,” which functions in the word תרועם (*tero’em*), *You will smash them*, in Psalms 2. This association demonstrates that *teru’ah* implies strict Judgment, or that by producing the sound of *teru’ah* Israel is able to *smash* the harsh forces accusing them. See above, note 199.

On the supposed ignorance of the Babylonians, see above, note 199. On the enlightening effect of the air of the Holy Land, see BT *Bava Batra* 158b, in the name of Rabbi Zeira: “The air [or: climate] of the land of Israel makes one wise.” See *Zohar* 1:225a.

On the verse in Psalms 89 and the significance of the wording *who know the blast*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:4; *Zohar* 2:250b–251a (*Heikh*); 3:18b, 99b, 100b, 149b. The verse reads: *Happy the people who know* תרועה (*teru’ah*), *the shout of joy* [or: *the (horn’s) blast*].

204. **to walk in the light of the countenance…** Paraphrasing the verse in Psalms 89 (quoted above): *they walk in the light of Your presence* [literally: *face, countenance*].

The concluding sentence means that “one should know the mystery” of *teru’ah*. On the primordial light, see above, note 168.

205. **יותרת מן הכבד (*yoteret min ha-kaved*), *lobe from the liver*…** Rabbi Shim’on quotes from two verses in Leviticus that list portions of a sacrifice to be burnt on the altar. The

liver and its lobe represent the demonic couple, Samael and Lilith. In a sacrifice, the liver nourishes Samael, while the lobe of the liver nourishes the serpent Lilith. See above, note 157.

According to their simple sense, the phrases *from the liver* and *over the liver* are synonymous, but Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes between them. *Lobe from the liver* refers to Lilith (described as *woman of whoredom*) coming forth *from* Samael to seduce humans to sin.

Cf. the account of Satan's activity in BT *Bava Batra* 16a: "He descends and leads astray, ascends and arouses wrath, obtains authorization and seizes the soul."

Leviticus 9:10 reads in full: *The fat and the kidneys* הכבד ואת היתרת מן (*ve-et ha-yoteret min ha-kaved*), *and the lobe from the liver, from the purification offering* [or: *the sin offering*] *he turned into smoke on the altar, as YHVH had commanded Moses*.

Leviticus 3:3–4 reads: *He shall bring forward from the sacrifice of well-being a fire offering to YHVH: the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is around the entrails, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, which is on the sinews*, ואת היתרת על הכבד (*ve-et ha-yoteret al ha-kaved*), *and the lobe on* [or: *over*] *the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys*.

206. ***Yoteret al ha-kaved*, *Lobe over the liver…*** This wording implies that by seducing humans to sin, Lilith is empowered and dominates her male partner, Samael, ruling *over* him.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *You had the forehead of a whore, you refused to be ashamed*. In this verse *the forehead* implies brazenness or impudence. Cf. *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*).

207. **מרה (*marah*), bile…** Bile is secreted by the liver. In ancient and medieval physiology, it is one of the humors associated with anger and melancholy. Here it is identified with the sword of the Angel of Death.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 20b: “It is said of the Angel of Death that he is all full of eyes. When a sick person is about to depart [from this world], he stands above his head with his sword drawn in his hand and a drop of bile hanging on it. As the sick person sees him, he trembles and opens his mouth [in fright], and [the Angel of Death] flings it into his mouth. From this he dies, from this he decays, from this his face turns green.”

The verse in Proverbs describes the seductive “strange woman,” identified here with Lilith. On bile as the source of all fatal illnesses, see *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 80. Cf. JT *Shabbat* 14:3, 14c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:8; BT *Bava Metsi’a* 107b.

208. **On that day, it roams the world…** On Rosh Hashanah, Lilith (or Samael) roams the world, gathering all the sins. Israel responds by sounding the shofar. The *teru’ah* (alarm) represents strict Judgment, and the *teqi’ah* (blast) represents lenient Judgment. By producing these sounds with pure intention, Israel succeeds in stimulating Compassion above, thereby assuaging Judgment.

Whatever Samael (symbolized by the liver) obtains, it offers to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the heart). But *Shekhinah* has no desire for the sins of Israel, only for its good deeds. The evil deeds are left for Samael, who casts them (along with their guilt and punishment) upon the other nations of the world.

The verse in Leviticus describes the scapegoat bearing all of Israel’s sins, which was sent off to the desert to the demon Azazel, who is identified with Samael. The verse reads: *The goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities to a remote region* [or: *a cutoff land*; *a barren land*].

On the various sounds of the shofar, see Vol. 8, pp. 134–35, n. 234. Cf. above, note 199. On the relation between the heart and the liver, see above, note 140. On Israel as the heart, and the other nations of the world as the other limbs, see ibid.

209. **This path was prepared for me…** Namely, the path on which he encountered Rabbi Shim'on. (See above at notes 144–46.) Grateful for the divine words conveyed by Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi Pinḥas praises him while dreading the day when the world will be orphaned of him and deprived of his wisdom.

On the phrase "words of the Ancient of Days," see the rabbinic blessing in BT *Berakhot* 17a: "May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days!" See also BT *Bava Batra* 91b; *Zohar* 1:4b, 8b–9a; 2:134b, 143a, 149a, 168a; 3:20a, 105b, 138b (*IR*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 49; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 216, n. 215.

On being "orphaned," see Rabbi Akiva's exclamation at the death of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Hyrcanus (*Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 25): "Woe unto me, my master, because of you! Woe unto me, my teacher, because of you! For you have left the whole generation orphaned!" See *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 16; *Zohar* 1:99a (*MhN*); 2:23b, 68a, 100b; 3:100b, 236a; *ZḤ* 7a (*MhN*), 19c (*MhN*).

210. **For the liver obtains all…** See above, note 208. Samael (symbolized by the liver) gathers not only Israel's sins but also their merits, so that when he accuses Israel in the heavenly court he can mention their merits as well, in order to make his case more believable.

See BT *Sotah* 35a, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Any slander that does not include some truth at its beginning does not endure in the end."

211. **He, too, opened…** Namely, Rabbi Pinḥas. The story about King David resembles a tale near the beginning of *Pereq Shirah* (a collection of hymnic sayings that has affinity with *Heikhalot* literature). See *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Psalms 889. Cf. *ZḤ* 47c; *Zohar* 3:222b (*RM*).

212. ***The Nile will swarm with frogs…*** The full verse (describing the second of the ten plagues brought upon the Egyptians) reads: *The Nile will swarm with frogs and they will come up and come into your house, into your bedroom,*

onto your bed, into your servants' houses, upon your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls.

The frog's statement—"since I offered my body"—refers specifically to the phrase *into your ovens*. See BT *Pesaḥim* 53b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19, p. 346; *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 14; *Midrash Tehillim* 28:2; *Shemot Rabbah* 10:2; *Zohar* 2:29b.

213. ***O YHVH, my heart is not high…*** The verse reads: *O YHVH, my heart is not haughty* [literally: *high*].

By offering the daily sacrifice, Israel ensures that *Shekhinah* (known as *heart* and Assembly of Israel) does not ascend *high* above Her angelic cohorts, but rather is united with them. Rabbi Pinḥas may also be implying that by offering a sacrifice with pure intention, a person demonstrates that his *heart is not haughty*. Such true devotion stimulates *Shekhinah* to unite with Her cohorts and not ascend *high*, but rather to remain close to the world, providing nourishment and blessing. The "thorns" represent demonic forces (or the heavenly princes of the nations) threatening *Shekhinah*.

See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. *Miqdash Melekh*. On *Shekhinah*'s being "among the thorns," see the midrashic fragment from *Yelammedenu* published by Marmorstein, "Zur Erforschung des Jelamdenu-Problems," 281. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

214. **Similarly, with Israel…** When they turn back to God in *teshuvah*, He delivers them from exile ("from among the thorns").

According to the kabbalistic reading of Song of Songs, *Shekhinah* is addressed intimately by Her lover, *Tif'eret*, as *my sister*. She (like Her people, Israel) is pictured as a rose among the thorns. See Song of Songs 2:2 (quoted below at note 237). On Song of Songs 5:2, see above, p. 157, n. 14; below, note 256.

215. **From here on, let us go on our way…** The eagle's snatching of the rose and flying off is a sign that it is

time to move on.

216. **Until here, the way of Rabbi Pinḥas and of Rabbi Shim'on…** And now each party will continue on its own. On their initial encounter, see above at notes 144–46.

217. **He opened…** Before parting from Rabbi Shim'on and his companions, Rabbi Pinḥas offers a teaching.

The context in Psalms (60:1–2) reads: *For the leader* [or: *lead player*], *on shushan edut. A mikhtam of David, to teach, when he clashed with Aram-Naharaim and Aram-Zobah, and Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt*. King David's campaign against these armies east of the Jordan is reported in 2 Samuel 10. The meaning of the term *shushan edut* is uncertain, though it apparently refers to a musical instrument or a musical mode. The term *mikhtam* may mean "an inscription, epigram."

Here, Rabbi Pinḥas draws on a midrashic tradition that when David and Joab (his military commander) attacked the Arameans, they did so with the approval of the Sanhedrin, whose sages (or rulings) are pictured as שושנים (*shoshanim*), *lilies*. Thus *shushan edut, lily of testimony*, refers to the Sanhedrin, which clarifies and legislates the *testimony* of Torah. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 74:15; *Tanḥuma, Devarim* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 60:1; Rashi on Psalms 60:1.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your navel is a crescent bowl, let blended wine never lack! Your belly is a mound of wheat, hedged about with lilies*.

218. **This is *shushan edut*…** Rabbi Pinḥas declares that *shushan edut* has been manifested right in their midst. Now the term alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is "a rose of testimony." She, along with Her angelic cohorts, is chanting praise to the blessed Holy One. On שושן (*shushan*)—or שושנה (*shoshanah*)—as "rose" or "lily," see below, note 227.

219. **They rose and went on…** Rabbi Pinḥas (and his companions) heading in one direction, and Rabbi Shim'on

(together with his companions) in another.

The reference to “the village of עקימון (*aqimon*), “Akimon,” may be a playful inversion of the toponym עמיקון (*amiqon*), “Amikon,” which is a variant of עמיקו (*amiqo*), “Amiko,” a village mentioned in rabbinic literature, probably identical with עמקא (*amqa*), “Amka,” northeast of Acre. Amka is located on (or near) the site of the biblical בית העמק (*beit ha-emeq*), “Bethemek,” mentioned in Joshua 19:27. See *Tosefta Bava Qamma* 8:10; BT *Ta’anit* 21a; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 9:86; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *ABD*, 1:685b–686a. Cf. *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

220. **Rabbi Ḥiyya raised his eyes…** He wonders about the deeper significance of shooting stars (comets). The phrase “stars of a flying scepter” renders כוכביא דשרביטא (*kokhevayya de-sharvita*), “stars of a scepter,” which plays on the rabbinic term כוכבא דשביט (*kokheva de-shaveit*), “a flying star,” a comet. See BT *Berakhot* 58b; *Zohar* 1:223b; 2:171b.

221. ***He counts the number of the stars…*** The full verse reads: *He counts the number of the stars, to all of them gives names*.

The full verse in Isaiah, referring to the stars and constellations, reads: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these? The one who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name* [or: *and summons each of them*]: *because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing*.

222. **it is a time of favor…** The morning is symbolized and characterized by the streaming light of *Ḥesed*.

The phrase “prisoners of the King” means those confined to their sickbed. See above, p. 314, n. 58.

223. ***Like an eagle rousing his nest…*** This verse demonstrates the eagle’s mercy.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *An eye that mocks a father and scorns obedience to a mother—the ravens of the brook will peck it out* [or: *gouge it out*], *and the eagle’s young will devour it*. Although the conclusion of this verse

certainly does not seem to demonstrate the eagle's mercy, Rabbi Pinḥas is drawing on a midrashic reading attributed to Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai. See JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 15d: "Let the raven, who is cruel, come and *peck it out* and not benefit from it. *And the eagle's young will devour it*—let the eagle, who is merciful, come and *devour it* and benefit from it."

As mentioned in the preceding note, the morning alludes to the streaming light of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham, who *rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3). See above, p. 319, n. 70.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Like an eagle rousing his nest, hovering over his fledglings, He spread His wings, He took him, bearing him on His pinion*. The verse in Psalms reads: *O YHVH, in the morning You will hear* [or: *You hear*] *my voice, in the morning I will arrange it* [or: *I arrange it*] *before You and wait expectantly* [or: *and keep watch*]. The expression *I will arrange it* can also be rendered *I will present my case*.

On the passage in JT *Pe'ah*, see JT *Qiddushin* 1:7, 61b–c; *Midrash Shemu'el* 7:2; *Tanḥuma, Eqev* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Eqev* 3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23, 122a. On the eagle's compassion, see also *Sifrei* Deuteronomy 314 (and parallels); *Zohar* 2:80b; 3:298b.

224. **This matter of King Solomon…** Namely, the legend of Solomon's daily flight on the wings of an eagle.

See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:25, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Rav Yitsḥak: "Solomon had a great eagle upon which he rode and travelled to Tadmor in the desert and returned in one day, as is written: *He* [namely Solomon] *built* [or: *fortified*] *Tadmor in the wilderness* (2 Chronicles 8:4)." See *Zohar* 2:112b–113a.

Tadmor was an important oasis in the Syrian desert, known as Palmyra in classical sources. (Palmyra is a translation of the Semitic name Tadmor, which is probably connected with the word *tamar*, "palm tree." Cf. 1 Kings

9:18.) Here, the name appears as Tarmod, as in some rabbinic sources. Rabbi Pinḥas distinguishes between “Tarmod in the wilderness” (inhabited by demonic powers) and the other Tarmod (inhabited by the Tarmodians).

The rabbis viewed Tadmor (or Palmyra) with animosity, and according to midrashic tradition the Palmyrenes participated in the destruction of the First and Second Temples. According to Arab legend, Tadmor was built by jinns (spirits, demons) under the command of Solomon. See JT *Ta’anit* 4:6, 69b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 56:11; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; BT *Yevamot* 17a; Hitti, *History of Syria*, 389; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 166–68.

On Solomon and the eagle, see also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 4:149–50; 6:291, nn. 50–53; Steinsaltz, “Ha-Nesher ha-Gadol.” On “four hundred parasangs,” see BT *Gittin* 68b, where the demon Ashmedai hurls King Solomon this same distance. On the Mountains of Darkness, see above, p. 381, n. 281.

225. **Solomon would write a slip…** Recording a holy name. On Uzza and Aza’el, see above, p. 233, n. 3.

226. **Solomon would take out a ring…** As soon as he threw this into the eagle’s mouth, Uzza and Aza’el would tell him whatever he wished to know.

The verse in Chronicles reads: ויבן (*Va-yiven*), *He built* [or: *fortified*], *Tadmor in the wilderness*. Rabbi Ḥiyya adds here: *in the mountains*. Cf. 1 Kings 9:17–18: *Solomon built* [or: *fortified*] *Gezer… and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land*. On the switch from *Tadmor* to *Tarmod*, see above, note 224. On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24.

Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya interprets ויבן (*va-yiven*), *he built*, on the basis of a similar-sounding verb: ויבינו (*va-yavinu*), *they understood*. The full verse in Nehemiah reads: *They read from the scroll of the Torah of God, explaining it and giving the sense*, ויבינו (*va-yavinu*), *and* [or: *so that*] *they understood,*

the reading. On Solomon's ring, cf. BT *Gittin* 68a–b; Vol. 5, p. 112, n. 316.

227. **the eagle suddenly came back...** Just as Rabbi Ḥiyya finished telling about Solomon and the eagle. Earlier, the eagle had taken the rose. See above at note 215.

Rabbi Pinḥas had opened with the verse in Psalms (above at note 217), which begins: *For the leader* [or: *lead player*], *on* שושן עדות (*shushan edut*). As mentioned in that note, the meaning of the phrase *shushan edut* is uncertain, but here Rabbi Pinḥas construes it as *a rose of testimony*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*.

In the Bible, שושן (*shushan*)—and שושנה (*shoshanah*)—probably mean "lily" or "lotus," though sometimes in the *Zohar* the meaning is "rose." See above, p. 197, n. 32; Vol. 6, p. 66, n. 33.

228. **what testimony does *a rose* present?...** Rabbi Pinḥas goes on to explain how the configuration of a rose alludes (or "testifies") to the act of Creation, to the nature of *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), and to the unification of the *sefirot*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

229. **this שושנה (*shoshanah*), rose, has thirteen petals...** A rose blossom can have thirteen petals in its second tier. The leaves of rose plants grow in clusters of five (or nine or thirteen) leaves. On this passage, see *Zohar* 1:1a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 183–84.

230. **Those thirteen are thirteen attributes of Compassion...** The thirteen petals of the rose allude to God's attributes of Compassion, which flow into *Shekhinah* through *Yesod* (Aramaic, *Yesoda*), who is known as Covenant. *Yesod* (the divine phallus) is associated with the covenant of circumcision.

In rabbinic tradition, God's thirteen attributes of Compassion are derived from Exodus 34:6–7. See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17b. According to Kabbalah, these qualities

originate in *Keter*, the highest *sefirah*, the realm of total Compassion untainted by Judgment.

231. **Five sturdy ones…** The five leaves of the rose symbolize five *sefirot* issuing from *Binah*—namely *Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tif'eret, Netsaḥ*, and *Hod*. In total, these five correspond to the "fifty gates" of *Binah*. These fifty potencies expand into "five hundred years," through which *Yesod* extends. He is pictured as the Tree of Life because he conveys the entire flow of emanation.

The image of *Binah*'s fifty gates derives from a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*), understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

The image of five hundred years derives from a passage in *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:6, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Ila'i: "The Tree of Life extends over a journey of five hundred years, and all the waters of Creation branch off beneath it." See above, pp. 248–49, n. 10.

232. **Testimony to the act of Creation…** As soon explained, the configuration of the rose alludes to the biblical account of Creation—specifically to several sets of words in the opening verses.

In the opening verse of Genesis, the name אלהים (*Elohim*) signifies both *Binah* (who is known as the World that is Coming) and *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279.

233. **Rose of testimony…** The thirteen petals of the rose correspond (or "testify") to the thirteen words between the first mention of *Elohim* (in Genesis 1:1) and the second (toward the end of Genesis 1:2).

The context in Genesis (1:1–3) reads: *In the beginning* אלהים (*Elohim*) *created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was chaos and void, with darkness over the face of the deep, and the spirit* [or: *breath, wind*] *of* אלהים

(*Elohim*) *hovering over the waters*. ויאמר אלהים (*Va-yomer Elohim*), *Elohim said* [or: *Said Elohim*], *"Let there be light." And there was light*.

234. **Five sturdy ones…** The five leaves of the rose correspond to the five words between the second and third occurrences of *Elohim*. For the biblical context, see the preceding note.

The concluding phrase ("five others") means "five other leaves" (in addition to the thirteen petals). The *Zohar* employs the same Aramaic word—עלין (*alin*)—for both "leaves" and "petals."

235. **Afterward, *Let there be light*…** Alluding to the root of the rose, to which the thirteen petals and the five leaves are all connected. This root corresponds to *Yesod*, who conveys both the thirteen attributes of Compassion and the light of the five *sefirot* (*Ḥesed* through *Hod*) to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the rose). See above, notes 230–31. For the biblical context, see above, note 233.

236. **Testimony to unification…** The configuration of the rose alludes to the unification of the *sefirot*, which is stimulated and actualized by the recitation of the *Shema*.

The five leaves of the rose correspond to the first five words of the *Shema*. The numerical value of the sixth word—אחד (*eḥad*), *one*—is thirteen, corresponding to the thirteen petals. The word *eḥad* also alludes to *Yesod*, who unifies all the aspects of emanation and merges with *Shekhinah*. He is pictured as "the King's signet ring."

The verse in Deuteronomy reads in full: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*. On the significance of the *Shema*, see above, p. 377, n. 271.

237. כשושנה **(*Ke-shoshanah*), *Like a rose, among the thorns*…** This verse applies to both Israel and *Shekhinah*. Israel is surrounded by threatening nations, while *Shekhinah* is surrounded by those nations' heavenly princes.

On the closed and open rose, see above at note 214. On *Shekhinah*'s being among the thorns, see above, note 213. The

full verse in Song of Songs reads: כשושנה (*Ke-shoshanah*), *Like a lily* [or: *rose*], *among the thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens*. On *shoshanah* as "lily" or "rose," see above, note 227. On this verse, see above, pp. 196–97, n. 32.

238. **I have already heard about these closed organs…** Apparently referring to the liver and its lobe, which represent the demonic couple, Samael and the Lilith. See above, note 157. For various interpretations, see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

239. **The heart has already been discussed…** The heart symbolizes *Shekhinah*. (See above, notes 156–59.) She conveys Divine Judgment, whose intense heat would destroy the world, were it not for a cooling breeze.

240. ***And YHVH rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire…*** According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2 (on this verse, in the name of Rabbi El'azar), "Wherever it is said *And YHVH*, this implies: He and His court." In Kabbalah, this court symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Din* (Judgment) and pronounces the divine decree, so the phrase *And YHVH* encompasses *YHVH* and *Shekhinah*."

Here, Rabbi Shim'on explains that Divine Judgment burned up Sodom and Gomorrah because the angelic lobes of the lung (Raphael and Tsadqiel) were not blowing a cooling breeze upon *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the heart and *the dove*). He plays on two senses of כנף (*kanaf*): "wing" and "lobe (of the lung)." *Silver* symbolizes the soothing quality of *Ḥesed*. According to medieval physiology, the lungs cool the heart.

The verse in Psalms 104 reads: מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט עושה (*Oseh mal'akhav ruḥot, mesharetav esh lohet*), which is often understood as *He makes winds His messengers* [or: *His angels*], *flaming fire His ministers*. Here, drawing on a rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on reads the opening words according to their precise order: *He makes His angels winds*. See above, p. 458, n. 531.

The archangel Raphael (whose name means “God healed”) is appointed over healing. On the angel Tsadqiel, see Vol. 8, p. 528, n. 114. On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see Vol. 7, pp. 46–47, n. 141.

241. **The spleen…** This organ (like the lobe of the liver) represents Lilith, the partner of Samael. She is the demonic *power* responsible for killing babies, appointed by Samael (who is identified as the Angel of Death).

The verse in Genesis records the divine command on the fourth day of Creation, when *God said, "Let there be* מארת (*me'orot*), *lights*." The word מארת (*me'orot*), *lights*, is written without *vavs*, the vowel letters. Such variant spelling is common in the Bible and affects neither the pronunciation nor the simple meaning of the words. As construed here, however, the deficient spelling alludes to a profound lack: the light of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) had diminished, and Her union with *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) was disrupted. The void was filled by demonic evil or "curse": מארה (*me'erah*), represented here by Lilith. (The form מארת [*me'erat*] means "curse of," as in Proverbs 3:33.)

See JT *Ta'anit* 4:4, 68b; BT *Ta'anit* 27b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:1; Vol. 7, pp. 170–71, n. 6. On Satan as the Angel of Death, see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same."

The association of the spleen with "toying" (or causing laughter) recalls BT *Berakhot* 61b: "The spleen produces laughter." The phrase "potent breast" renders תוקפא (*tuqpa*); see above, pp. 423–24, n. 418. On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see above, p. 438, n. 461.

242. **The spleen follows the nature of the liver…** The former representing Lilith; the latter, Samael. (See above, note 157.)

The second day of Creation is the only one lacking the formula *God saw that it was good* (or its equivalent). According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6 (in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Ḥalafta), the reason for this lack is "because on that day Hell was created." See Vol. 1, p. 128, n. 156. On

the negative aspect of the fourth day, see the preceding note.

Thus, both the second and the fourth days of the week are inauspicious. On the former, Satan (or the Angel of Death) may strike adults; on the latter, Lilith may strike babies. On the negative quality of both days (and the custom of not beginning a project on either day), see Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Sefer ha-Roqeaḥ*, 216; *ZḤ* 69b–c (*ShS*); *Zohar* 3:273a (*RM*), 281b (*RM*); Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh sheba-Nistar*, 125–26; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

243. **The maw…** Hebrew, קיבה (*qeivah*). This organ is a pouch-like appendix to the stomach, the fourth stomach of ruminating animals.

The association of the maw with sleep recalls BT *Berakhot* 61b: "The maw brings sleep." The reference to "one-sixtieth of death" derives from ibid. 57b: "Sleep is one-sixtieth of death." See above, p. 2, n. 5.

On the demonic angel Astirya (or Asirta), see *Zohar* 2:263b (*Heikh*), 267a–b (*Heikh*). According to the latter passage, Asirta is located in the sixth palace of impurity.

244. **The stomach…** Its nourishment of the lower parts of the body corresponds to the nourishment of demonic forces from sacrificial portions and fat that are burned throughout the night on the altar. See above, p. 488, n. 629.

As explained previously, the liver represents Samael, which "obtains all and offers to the heart," symbolizing *Shekhinah*. See above, note 158.

The verse from Ezekiel describes his vision of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne. Each being had four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of a bull on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. The full verse reads: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had a bull's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face*. According to Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 45), the peculiar

formulation of the verse reflects the sequence of observation. The onlooker (on any side) was confronted by a human face, flanked by two animal faces on its right and left. Finally, from what could be seen on the heads of the rest of the creatures, the onlooker inferred that in back of the human face confronting him was an eagle's face.

Here, the devouring stomach is associated with the *lion's face*, which is equivalent to "the image of a lion" that appeared on the altar in the Temple, according to the Talmud. See BT *Yoma* 21b: "Five things were reported about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion, it was as clear as sunlight, its flame was of substance, it devoured wet wood like dry wood, and it caused no smoke to rise." See above, p. 488, nn. 627–28.

245. **corresponding to the pattern above** Of the sefirotic limbs.

246. **The trachea…** The walls of the trachea (or windpipe) consist of rings of cartilage (although more than six). Here, the six rings are pictured as six potencies of *Gevurah*, who issues from *Binah*, who is Herself symbolized by the shofar (the ram's horn). The voice issuing from the trachea corresponds to the sound issuing from the shofar.

Rabbi Shim'on plays on two senses of the word אלים (*elim*): "God" (or "gods") and "rams." Isaac—who at the last moment was replaced on the altar by a ram—symbolizes *Gevurah*. See Genesis 22:13. The verse in Psalms reads: *Grant* [or: *Ascribe*] *to YHVH*, בני אלים (*benei elim*), *O sons of God; grant to YHVH glory and strength!*

247. **They bring forth breath and voice…** The six rings generate sound and thunder.

Rabbi Shim'on construes the verb הרעים (*hir'im*) as *causes to thunder*, implying that God brings about thunder through the *benei elim*, *sons of God*—the six potencies of *Gevurah*.

248. **The esophagus…** Rabbi Shim'on identifies this organ with the אישים (*ishim*), "personages," a term that

(according to Maimonides) refers to the tenth and lowest class of angels. Fittingly, the *ishim* swallow what is burnt on the altar by אשא (*isha*), "the fire."

In the Mishnah (*Zevaḥim* 5:4; 10:2), the phrase כליל לאשים (*kalil la-ishim*) refers to a sacrifice that is "given entirely to the fires" (or "burnt entirely in the [altar-]fires.)" Here, this phrase also implies "given entirely to the *ishim* (the angelic 'personages')."

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *The levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no share and estate with Israel.* אשי יהוה (*Ishei YHVH*), *The fire offerings of YHVH, and His estate they shall eat*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes the second half of the verse as *The ishim* (angelic personages) *of YHVH… shall eat*. The phrase "the others" refers to other entities, who do not consume the offerings (perhaps including the *benei elim*, discussed above). On the *ishim*, see above, note 160.

249. **All inhabitants of the world outside…** No human can fathom how the *ishim* (angelic personages) eat the sacrificial offerings, but the higher angelic rungs understand—and they receive sustenance from the *ishim*.

The Talmudic quotation "The esophagus cannot be examined from the outside, but only from the inside" refers to examining the outer or inner layers of the esophagus of a slaughtered animal to determine whether there is a defect that would render the animal unkosher. See BT *Ḥullin* 28b, 43a–b, in the name of Rabbah. Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets this to mean that the *ishim* (angelic personages)—symbolized by the esophagus—"cannot be examined" or known "from the outside" (i.e., by humans), "but only from the inside" (i.e., by higher angels within the heavenly realm).

The inner "grinders" (or teeth) prepare the food for the *ishim*, "who rule over them." Ever since the Temple was destroyed, sacrifices could not be offered, so the angelic "grinders" have grown idle.

Rabbi Shim'on divides the word ושט (*veshet*), "esophagus," into two components: ו שט (*vav, shat*). The bent shape of the letter ו (*vav*) resembles that of the esophagus, while the word שט (*shat*) means "roam"—as in "roaming for food," which pertains to this organ and to the *ishim*, who "are called ושט (*veshet*), esophagus."

On the function of the liver, see above, notes 140, 157. The full verse in Ecclesiastes (parts of which seem to refer to the deterioration of an aging body) reads: *On the day that the guards of the house will quake and the stalwart men be twisted, and the grinders* [or: *the maids who grind; the teeth*] *grow idle, for they are now few, and the ladies looking through the windows go dark*. See *ZḤ* 61c (*MhN, ShS*).

The full verse in Numbers (referring to the manna) reads: *The people would roam around and gather it and grind it between millstones or pound it in a mortar, cook it in a kettle and make it into cakes. It tasted like the cream of oil*.

250. **Drinking—wine and water…** The swallowing of wine and water by the esophagus symbolizes libations of wine and water on the altar.

The image of drink "absorbed by the lung" sounds strange, since, of course, the trachea (not the esophagus) leads to the lungs. The *Zohar* may be influenced here by the statement in BT *Berakhot* 61b: "The lung absorbs all kinds of liquids." See Rashi, ad loc., who explains this as referring to the lung absorbing liquids through the walls of the stomach. Rabbi Shim'on identifies the lung(s) with the seraphim. Cf. above at note 240.

251. **All of these…** Namely, each of the various angels mentioned above.

Ever since the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of sacrifices, the angels have lacked adequate nourishment, so they have diminished.

On the lasting effects of the destruction of the Temple, see M *Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: "Ever since the day that the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit." See *Zohar* 1:55b, 61b, 70b, 134a, 177a, 181b, 203a, 250a; 3:15b, 51b, 74b.

252. **orphaned of you** And deprived of your wisdom. On this idiom, see above, note 209.

253. **A large ע (*ayin*) and similarly ד (*dalet*)...** In the Masoretic text, the letter ע (*ayin*) in the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, is written large. Similarly, the letter ד (*dalet*) in the word אחד (*eḥad*), *one*, is written large. Together these two letters spell עד (*ed*), "witness," which is often understood as alluding to the fact that by reciting this first line of the *Shema* one witnesses and testifies to the oneness of God. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates the divine role of witness, based on the verse in Samuel.

Without the letter ע (*ayin*), the remaining letters of the word שמע (*shema*) are מ ש (*shin, mem*), which can be read as שם (*shem*), "name," alluding to *Shekhinah*, who reveals the divine essence and is known as the Name. But if these two letters signify שם (*shem*), why is the second letter an open מ (*mem*), rather than a closed ם (*mem*), as one would expect at the end of a word? The question, admittedly, is rather strained, but it enables Rabbi Shim'on to explain that the closed ם (*mem*) would allude to *Binah* (upper King), whereas the open מ (*mem*) alludes to *Shekhinah* (lower King).

Without the letter ד (*dalet*), the remaining letters of the word אחד (*eḥad*) are ח א (*alef, ḥet*), whose significance remains concealed, as implied by the quotation from Proverbs. Soon, they are discussed further.

On the large *ayin* and *dalet* in the opening line of the *Shema*, see Vol. 5, p. 425, n. 668; p. 427, n. 671. On the significance of the *Shema*, see above, p. 377, n. 271.

On the open מ (*mem*) and closed ם (*mem*), see above, p. 4, n. 7. On *Binah* as the closed ם (*mem*), see ibid. On *Shekhinah* as the open מ (*mem*), see *Zohar* 2:53b; 3:66b. On *Shekhinah* as God's name, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21.

The context in Samuel is the prophet's farewell speech to the people, in which he proclaims that he has taken nothing from them. The full verse reads: *He said to them, "YHVH is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that you have found not a thing in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."* The full verse in Proverbs reads: *God's honor is to conceal a matter; the honor of kings, to probe a matter*.

254. **Rav Hamnuna Sava...** This venerable authority also discussed the "unification" of the *Shema*, whereby one combines the various *sefirot*. Regarding the four "remaining" letters of the words שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, and אחד (*eḥad*), *one*, he said that the person reciting the *Shema* should permute these letters, "beginning in reverse and ending forward." This means that one begins with the first letter of the final word of verse—the א (*alef*) of אחד (*eḥad*)—and then jumps back to the first letter of the first word: the ש (*shin*) of שמע (*shema*). This is "beginning in reverse." Then one continues with the second letter of the first word—the מ (*mem*) of שמע (*shema*)—and jumps forward to the second letter of the last word: the ח (*ḥet*) of אחד (*eḥad*). This is "ending forward." This progression of four letters spells the word אשמח (*esmaḥ*), *I will rejoice*.

The phrase "*in YHVH*, precisely!" apparently refers to the unification of the letters of the name *YHVH*, which (like the opening line of the *Shema*), signifies the unification of the *sefirot*. See above, p. 74, n. 60.

For another reading (and interpretation) of the permutation described here, see *Ateret Tsevi; Nitsotsei Zohar*. On the figure of Rav Hamnuna, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

Concerning Enoch, Genesis 5:24 states: *He was no more, for God took him*. In postbiblical literature, this verse is taken to mean that God transported Enoch through the heavens, a journey recorded extensively in the Enoch literature. The *Zohar*'s Book of Enoch, though influenced by this literature, is not identical with any of its particular volumes. See Vol. 7, p. 54, n. 162.

255. **Furthermore, it includes...** The Book of Enoch includes another teaching. The letters of the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, can be grouped into two units: ש מ (*shin, mem*)—equivalent to שם (*shem*), "name"—and ע (*ayin*), which is numerically equivalent to seventy. This formation of the letters alludes to *Shekhinah* (the Divine Name), who includes all seventy aspects of the seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah* Herself. These seventy aspects are pictured as seventy divine names, associated here in particular with the central sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

On the seventy names of God, see Vol. 7, p. 200, n. 104. Cf. the seventy-two names of God (associated with the three patriarchal *sefirot*), discussed in Vol. 8, pp. 506–13. On the reading ע שם (*shem ayin*), see *Zohar* 2:160b, 216a. On the connection between the number seventy and the *Shema*, see also *Zohar* 2:133b, 263a.

256. ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה **(*Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH*...** Following the opening word of the *Shema*, these next four words allude to the four compartments of the tefillin (phylacteries) worn on the head.

Each of the tefillin (worn on the head and on the arm) contains four passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) written on parchment. The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head is divided into four compartments, each containing one of the four passages. In the *tefillah* of the arm all four passages are written on one piece of parchment in a single compartment.

The first passage (and compartment of the *tefillah* of the head) corresponds to the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*; the second, to *Binah*; the third, to *Ḥesed*; the fourth, to *Gevurah*.

Rabbi Shim'on indicates that all four compartments of the *tefillah* of the head are "held by א ח (*alef, ḥet*)," the "remaining letters" of the word אחד (*eḥad*). (See above, note 253.) These two letters are now construed as the word אח (*aḥ*), "brother"—namely the Divine Brother, *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*), who intimately addresses *Shekhinah*, as אחותי (*aḥoti*), *my sister, my love*.

The image of *Tif'eret* as "holding" or wearing the four compartments of the *tefillah* of the head recalls the Talmudic depiction of God wearing tefillin. See BT *Berakhot* 6a (quoted below, pp. 677–78, n. 52).

The knot of the *tefillah* of the head is pictured as the letter ד (*dalet*), which in Kabbalah often symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Here, She is described as "connected to them," namely to the *sefirot* symbolized by the four compartments (*Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*).

On the knot of the *tefillah* of the head, see BT *Berakhot* 7a: "*I will take away My palm and you will see My back* (Exodus 33:23). Rav Ḥana son of Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid, 'This teaches us that the blessed Holy One showed Moses the knot of tefillin [at the back of God's head].'" See *Zohar* 2:43b (*Piq*), 230a–b; 3:263a. On tefillin and their significance, see above, p. 73, n. 56. On the four compartments, see below, pp. 677–78, n. 52. On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, note 214.

257. **He wept—and laughed...** On this expression, see BT *Ta'anit* 25a (in an account of a dream-vision of Rabbi El'azar son of Pedat); *Zohar* 2:123b; 3:119a, 261a, 291b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 18b (*MhN*), 80b (*MhN, Rut*).

On the tension between revealing and concealing, see Vol. 8, pp. 320–21, n. 6. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

258. **Two straps emerge…** The two straps of the *tefillah* of the head symbolize *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, the two divine thighs of the Divine Male, or אח (*aḥ*), "brother." (See above, note 256.) This sefirotic pair is the source of prophecy. Higher in the sefirotic body are the two arms (*Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*), which embrace *Shekhinah*, pictured as the letter ד (*dalet*). On the hanging straps of the tefillin, see *Zohar* 3:175b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 240.

259. **Then She descends…** After being embraced by the divine arms, *Shekhinah* descends and unites with *Yesod*, the divine phallus, symbolized by the covenant of circumcision. On the letter י (*yod*) as the mark of circumcision see above, note 56.

260. **whoever preserves this covenant…** By maintaining sexual purity.

Phinehas "acted zealously for this covenant" by killing the fornicating couple Zimri and Cozbi. Thereby, he was saved from the harsh "Judgment above" (bringing the plague upon the Israelites) and "from judgment below" (apparently referring to the hordes of Simeonites threatening him). Furthermore, the letter י (*yod*), signifying the Covenant, was added to his name: פינחס (*Pineḥas*).

See above, notes 7, 23, 56. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*.

261. **This י (*yod*) must never be removed from the *tefillah* of the hand…** Whereas the knot of the *tefillah* of the head is pictured as the letter ד (*dalet*), the knot of the *tefillah* of the hand is pictured as the letter י (*yod*). The *tefillah* of the hand symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and its knot—the letter י (*yod*)—symbolizes *Yesod*. In order to preserve the union of the divine couple, the knot (or *yod*) "must never be removed."

The phrase "all its joy" may refer to the joy of the *yod* (symbolizing *Yesod*) or to the joy of the *tefillah* of the hand

(symbolizing *Shekhinah*). (See the following paragraph in the text.) On the importance of not moving "the *yod* of the knot" from the *tefillah* of the hand, see Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 27:2; idem, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 27:2.

262. **In the Male is צדיק (*tsaddiq*), Righteous One...** *Yesod* is known as צדיק (*tsaddiq*), "Righteous One," whereas *Shekhinah* is called צדק (*tsedeq*), "Righteousness." The only letter distinguishing the former from the latter is י (*yod*). *Shekhinah* delights in approaching and uniting with this letter.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. On *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* as *Tsaddiq* and *Tsedeq*, see *Zohar* 1:49a; 3:26a.

263. **Phinehas confronted the harsh Judgment of Isaac...** In acting boldly to block the plague, Phinehas confronted the quality of harsh Judgment, symbolized by Isaac. He was rewarded by having the letter י (*yod*)—the initial letter of יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), "Isaac"—added to his name: פינחס (*Pineḥas*), which now became numerically equivalent to the name יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), both equaling 208.

See above, note 260. The full verse in Psalms 106 reads: *Phinehas stood and prayed, and the plague was held back*. The image of standing in the breach appears earlier in the same psalm (verse 23), describing Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel in the incident of the Golden Calf. (See Exodus 32:9–14.)

264. **But counting depends only on Her eyes...** As mother of the bounded world, *Shekhinah* is the source of counting, whereas in the higher sefirotic realms unity prevails and numerical multiplicity is irrelevant. Specifically, *Shekhinah*'s eyes are filled with various numerical calculations. Yet here, the discussion of numerical value revolves around the name יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), "Isaac," which symbolizes the higher *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment).

Rabbi Shim'on explains that the power of Judgment, issuing from *Gevurah*, is actualized only through the eyes of *Shekhinah*, who executes Judgment upon the world. He plays on the word עין (*ayin*), "eye," and the numerical value of the letter ע (*ayin*), which is seventy. So the עיינין (*aynin*), "eyes," of *Shekhinah* represent seventy thrones (and members) of the heavenly Sanhedrin. Consequently, "all is one"—there is no contradiction here between the eyes of *Shekhinah* and the realm of *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac)—since both function together.

On the association of *Shekhinah* (and Her eyes) with counting, see above, notes 116, 122, 124. On *Shekhinah* and the Sanhedrin, see Vol. 7, p. 200, n. 104. On the Sanhedrin as the eyes (of the community), see Vol. 7, p. 126, n. 380.

265. **Phinehas stood and executed Judgment…** In order to kill the fornicating couple, Zimri and Cozbi, Phinehas had to take on the quality of harsh Judgment, represented by Isaac on the left side of the *sefirot*. As a reward for his zealous act, Phinehas was rewarded with the high priesthood, symbolized by *Ḥesed* on the right side.

On Phinehas's bold action, see above, note 7. On left being included in right, see above, p. 168, n. 4.

266. ***He turned away My wrath…*** When Phinehas saw *wrath* issuing from the quality of *Din* (Judgment), he took on that same quality and *turned away* the divine *wrath*.

The verse from Numbers reads in full: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest* השיב (*heshiv*), *turned away* [or: *turned back*], *My wrath from the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*.

267. **he rendered judgment and executed judgment…** Phinehas rendered judgment against Zimri, based on the rule in M *Sanhedrin* 9:6: "If a man copulates with an Aramean [i.e., a heathen] woman, zealots can attack him."

The letter י (*yod*) in the name פינחס (*Pineḥas*), "Phinehas," represents the quality of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), "Isaac," and his initial letter: י (*yod*). The concluding clause—"for it is all"—apparently means that even though earlier the letter *yod* was said to symbolize *Yesod*, it actually symbolizes both *Din* and *Yesod*, since the latter conveys the power of the former.

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He drew back* [or: *withdrew*] *His right hand in the face of the enemy* [thereby enabling them to defeat Israel]. See above, p. 423, n. 418.

On the passage in M *Sanhedrin*, see BT *Sanhedrin* 82a; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 21; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 30; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:25; *Zohar* 3:96b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 230. On Phinehas's action, see above, note 7. The context in Numbers (25:7–8) reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest saw, and he rose from the midst of the community and took a spear in his hand. And he came after the Israelite man into the alcove and stabbed the two of them, the Israelite man and the woman, in her alcove* [or: *in her belly*], *and the plague was held back from the Children of Israel*.

268. **מעל (*Me-al*), *From above, the Children of Israel…*** The full verse reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest turned away My wrath* מעל (*me-al*), *from, the Children of Israel by zealously enacting My zeal in their midst, so I did not annihilate the Children of Israel through My zeal*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on reads the word מעל (*me-al*) hyperliterally: *from above*—implying that Phinehas saw God's *wrath* "descending upon the heads of Israel" *from above*.

269. **He saw the letter מ (*mem*) flying in the sky…** Signifying the Angel of מות (*mavet*), "Death." This initial letter of the word מות (*mavet*), "death," was seeking to join the remaining letters of the word in order to be actualized and prolong the plague. However, Phinehas, who had taken on

the quality of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac, snatched away this threatening letter.

270. **Why?...** That is, why did Phinehas snatch the letter מ (*mem*) from the Angel of מות (*mavet*), "Death"?

When Phinehas took on the quality of *Din* (Judgment)—symbolized by יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), "Isaac"—the letter י (*yod*) was added to his name: פינחס (*Pineḥas*). Thereby, his name became numerically equivalent to יצחק (*Yitsḥaq*), totaling ר ח (*resh, ḥet*), 208. By snatching and incorporating the letter מ (*mem*), Phinehas was now transformed from ר ח (*resh, ḥet*) into ר מ ח (*resh, mem, ḥet*), which spells רמח (*romaḥ*), *a spear*—the weapon by which he killed the fornicating couple, Zimri and Cozbi. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 267.

271. **the letter מ (*mem*) was the original sign for Adam...** Whose sin brought מות (*mavet*), "death," upon the world. The letter מ (*mem*)—the initial letter of מות (*mavet*)—was flying over Adam's head as Eve picked the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. It needed only the remaining two letters of מות (*mavet*)—namely ת ו (*vav, tav*)—in order to establish death in the world. These two letters were provided when Eve *ate* the fruit and *gave* some to Adam, and their eyes *were opened*. In the biblical text, all three of these events are described in words beginning with the letters ת ו (*vav, tav*).

See *Zohar* 1:12b. The context in Genesis 3:6–7 reads: *The woman saw that the tree was good for eating and attractive to the eyes and the tree was desirable to look at* [or: *to contemplate, to bring wisdom*], *and she took of its fruit and she ate, and she gave also to her man with her, and he ate. And the eyes of the two were opened, and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves and made themselves loincloths*.

272. **the Explicit Name...** That is, the name *YHVH*, whose power enabled Phinehas to incorporate the letter מ (*mem*). On the concluding sentence, see above, note 268.

273. ***By zealously enacting My zeal…*** Phinehas acted zealously for the holy covenant—identified with the covenant of circumcision—because the sinning males were inserting their circumcised penises into "an alien domain," namely the vaginas of foreign women. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 268.

274. ***In their midst…*** In order to kill Zimri (who was a chieftain in the tribe of Simeon), Phinehas had to head directly into hordes of Zimri's fellow Simeonites. This is the simple sense of בתוכם (*be-tokham*), *in their midst*. However, Rabbi Shim'on begins to offer a more mysterious interpretation, based on splitting the word בתוכם (*be-tokham*), into two units: בתוך מ (*be-tokh mem*), *in the midst of mem*. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 268.

275. **Why מ (*mem*)?…** The answer is because this letter begins the word מות (*mavet*), "death." And because its numerical value (forty) signifies "forty lashes" (the number of lashes administered by a court of law, according to Deuteronomy 25:3). The number forty is also associated with the number four, alluding to the four types of capital punishment (according to M *Sanhedrin* 7:1): stoning, burning, beheading, and strangulation. The phrase "descending from four" alludes to lower forces of impurity.

So Phinehas displayed zeal בתוך מ (*be-tokh mem*), *in the midst of mem—in the midst of* the various implements employed by the Angel of מות (*mavet*), "Death," symbolized by the letter מ (*mem*).

On the exact number of lashes administered by a court, see M *Makkot* 3:10; above, p. 354, n. 196; Vol. 6, p. 32, n. 82. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 268.

276. **elucidation of the matter!…** Rabbi Shim'on clarifies the identity and lineage of those who died in the plague.

According to Exodus 12:38, when the Israelites came forth from Egypt, *a mixed multitude also went up with them* —that is, hordes of non-Israelites escaped with them.

Rabbinic tradition teaches that this mixed multitude was responsible for the sin of the Golden Calf. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the mixed multitude intermingled with women from the tribe of Simeon and engendered children, some of whom died in the incident of the Calf, some of whom died in another plague (apparently the plague described in the incident of Korah [Numbers 17:11–15]), and the rest of whom died here in the incident of Baal-peor. So the only Israelites who died in this incident were those born to the males of the mixed multitude and their Simeonite wives.

The simple sense of the verse in Numbers is ויהיו המתים במגפה (*Va-yihyu ha-metim ba-magefah*), *Those who died in the plague were* [i.e., *numbered*], *twenty-four thousand*. But Rabbi Shim'on construes the opening clause as: *The dead ones in the plague were*, alluding to the wicked mixed multitude—based on the rabbinic notion that "the righteous… even in their death are called 'living'; the wicked… even in their life are called 'dead.'" See BT *Berakhot* 18a–b; above, p. 214, n. 82.

On the declaration "Woe to the person who damages his seed!" see BT *Qiddushin* 70a; *Zohar* 2:77a–b; 3:90a; [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 58.

On the notion that all those who died in the plague (in the incident of Baal-peor) were from the tribe of Simeon, see above, p. 280, n. 98. On the mixed multitude's responsibility for the sin of the Golden Calf, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:8; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:7–8; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 21, 30; *Emor* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 15; *Shemot Rabbah* 42:6; *Zohar* 2:45b, 191a–192a.

277. **Since all of that holy seed were vigilant…** Except for the Simeonite women who intermingled with males of the mixed multitude, all the Israelites were careful not to do so. Immediately following the plague, God commanded Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron to take a census of the people (Numbers 26), "to show that not even

one of them was missing." The previous census is described at the beginning of Numbers.

In fact, the largest difference between the two censuses is the total number of Simeonites, which decreased dramatically between the first and second count. A midrashic tradition explains this decrease as due to the number of Simeonites who died in the plague. See Mann, ed., *Midrash Ḥadash al ha-Torah*, 68; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 26:14; Rashi on Numbers 26:13.

The wording *I did not annihilate the Children of Israel* now implies that God did annihilate those who were not pure Israelites, but rather the offspring of the mixed multitude (and female Simeonites).

278. **Similarly, in the incident of the Golden Calf...** The wording *about three thousand of the people*—rather than *of the Children of Israel*—implies that these were all members of the mixed multitude.

On the phrase *the people* as referring to the mixed multitude, see *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 19; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Exodus 32:1; *Zohar* 2:45b, 191a. Cf. above, note 276; *Zohar* 2:17b; Vol. 6, p. 80, n. 68.

The main subject of Exodus 35 is the contributions for, and the construction of, the Dwelling (or Tabernacle). Exodus 35:1 reads in full: *Moses assembled the whole community of the Children of Israel and said to them, "These are the things that* YHVH *has commanded you to do*." Exodus 35:5 reads in full: *Take from yourselves an offering for* [or: to] YHVH. *Everyone whose heart impels him shall bring it, an offering for* YHVH: *gold, silver, and bronze*.

279. **At first it is written: *From every man whose heart impels him...*** Originally, God wanted everyone—including the mixed multitude—to contribute an *offering* for the construction of the Dwelling. However, after the mixed multitude sinned by instigating the worship of the Golden Calf, God decided to exclude them from participating in the construction of the Dwelling. Now the offering would be

taken only from *the whole community of the Children of Israel*. The Dwelling would be reserved for only the true Israelites. Gradually, all of the mixed multitude were destroyed (the last of them perishing in the plague in the incident of Baal-peor).

See *Zohar* 2:195a. The context in Exodus (25:2–3) reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering. And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze*.

280. **Here, too, they were from that bad stock…** In the incident of Baal-peor, those who committed idolatry were the offspring of the mixed multitude. They are described as *the dead ones* who were killed *in the plague*. (See above, note 276.) After thus eliminating them, God wished to count the pure Israelites, as indicated by the verse in Numbers 26: שאו את ראש (*Se'u et rosh*), *Count the heads of* [or: *Take up the head-count of*], *all the community of the Children of Israel*. Rabbi Shim'on construes the clause *se'u et rosh* as *Raise the heads of*—indicating that God wanted to honor them and demonstrate their pedigree. On this reading, see *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Numbers 684, 773; *ZḤ* 50d; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 26:1–2, n. 3.

281. **ויצמד ישראל (*Va-yitsamed Yisra'el*), *Israel clung, to Baal-peor…*** The full verse reads: ויצמד ישראל (*Va-yitsamed Yisra'el*), *Israel clung* [or: *became hitched*; *yoked themselves*], *to Baal-peor, and the wrath of YHVH flared against Israel*.

On the association of the verb *va-yitsamed* with the noun צמיד (*tsamid*), "bracelet," see *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 18; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 27; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:23. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 64a.

282. **so it is: *Israel clung…*** Rabbi Shim'on affirms that *Israel clung to Baal-peor*, but they did not sin gravely enough to deserve death, as he soon explains.

283. ***Take all the leaders of the people and impale them*** So how can Rabbi Shim'on maintain that none of the

pure Israelites were punished by death?

The full verse reads: *YHVH said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and impale them to YHVH, facing the sun, that YHVH's flaring wrath turn away from Israel*."

284. ***The leaders of the people*, surely...** Again, *the people* alludes to the mixed multitude, as opposed to *the Children of Israel*. See above, note 278.

Although *Israel clung to Baal-peor*, they did not intentionally worship him (as Rabbi Shim'on soon explains). Rather, the mixed multitude and their offspring (referred to as *the people*) committed this grave sin.

Exodus 32:1 reads in full: *The people saw that Moses lagged in coming down from the mountain, and the people assembled against Aaron and said to him, "Rise up, make us Elohim, gods, that will go before us, for this man Moses who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him*."

The context in Numbers (25:1–2) reads: *Israel stayed at Shittim, and the people began to go whoring with the daughters of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods*.

285. **What is meant by *Israel clung to Baal-peor?*...** Although the simple sense of the verse is obviously that Israel committed idolatry, Rabbi Shim'on relies on a rabbinic interpretation of the name פעור (*pe'or*), based on the root פער (*p'r*), "to open wide, expose." See M *Sanhedrin* 7:6: "הפוער (*Ha-po'er*), One who exposes, himself to בעל פעור (*Ba'al pe'or*) [is to be stoned, because] this is how [Baal-peor] is worshiped." According to BT *Sanhedrin* 64a, the worship of Baal-peor involved not just exposing oneself but also defecating in front of the idol.

When the Israelites saw this disgusting ritual being performed, they imitated it, thinking that they were thereby disgracing Baal-peor. But, in fact, they were unintentionally

worshiping and strengthening him; so Phinehas had to atone for them.

The quotation from Isaiah (referring to idolatry) alludes to a midrashic play on words. See JT *Shabbat* 9:1, 11d, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "'צא (*Tse*), *Out!' you will call to it* —'צואה (*Tso'ah*), *Excrement!' you will call to it*." See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 13:2; *Eikhah Zuta* 1:29; *Zohar* 1:190b; 2:252a (*Heikh*), 265b (*Heikh*). On the image of "boiling excrement," see BT *Eruvin* 21b, in the name of Aḥa son of Ulla: "Whoever mocks the words of the Sages is punished in boiling excrement." Cf. BT *Gittin* 57a.

On the passage in M *Sanhedrin*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 131; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 28d; *Avodah Zarah* 3:4, 42d; BT *Sanhedrin* 61a; Albeck, *Mishnah*, 4:449. The context in Numbers (25:12–13) reads: *Therefore say: I hereby grant him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of eternal* [or: *perpetual*] *priesthood in recompense for his acting zealously for his God and atoning for the Children of Israel* [or: *because he acted zealously for his God and atoned for the Children of Israel*].

286. ***According to the lot...*** The biblical context is the apportioning of the Promised Land to the tribes of Israel.

287. **Not so with the blessed Holy One...** Unlike human artisans, who must plan their work carefully and need to keep improving it, God creates everything perfectly.

Cf. *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:6: "Out of chaos He formed substance, making what is not into what is. He hewed enormous pillars out of ether [or: air] that cannot be grasped."

288. ***Whatever God* יעשה (*ya'aseh*), *will do...*** The verse reads: *I know that whatever God* יעשה (*ya'aseh*), *does, will be forever*. Rabbi Yehudah construes the imperfect form *ya'aseh* as the future tense: *will do*, taking this to refer to what God *will do* after Creation, to sustain the world or to perform

miracles. See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:14; *Devarim Rabbah* 10:2; Rashi on Ecclesiastes 3:14.

289. **If so, what is meant by…** That is, if the verse refers to the perfection of creation, what is the point of the conclusion of the verse: *And God has acted that they should fear Him?*

The following verse in Ecclesiastes indicates that there is nothing new, so how can the earlier verse read *Whatever God will do?*

Ecclesiastes 3:15 reads in full: *That which was has already been, and what is to be already has been, and God seeks out the pursued* [or: *him who is sought; what has been sought*].

290. ***No eye has seen,* אלהים (*Elohim*), *O God, but You…*** The verse reads: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You* [literally: *He*] *will do for one who awaits You* [literally: *Him*]. Rabbi Yitsḥak asks why the verse switches from the second person (*but You*) to the third person (*what He will do for one who awaits Him*), and also why it employs the (apparently) future tense (*what He* [or: *You*] *will do*), rather than the past tense (*what You did*), which would refer correctly to God's original and everlasting Creation.

He explains that *Elohim* refers to *Binah*, the Divine Mother, who gives birth to all the lower *sefirot*, "kindling" them and sustaining them continually. She is known as the World that is Coming—"coming constantly and never ceasing" (*Zohar* 3:290b [*IZ*]). From Her "emerges one tree," namely *Tif'eret*, together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*.

On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279. On the wording of the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 3:79b, 267b; *ZḤ* 49d.

291. **Upon that tree depends faith…** The sefirotic realm of faith (or specifically *Shekhinah*, who includes all the higher *sefirot*) depends upon *Tif'eret*.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I know that whatever* יעשה האלהים (*ya'aseh ha-Elohim*), *the Elohim, will do*, הוא (*hu*), *it, will be forever*. Rabbi Yitsḥak construes *hu* not as *it* but rather *He*, referring to *Tif'eret*, who *will be forever*—that is "*He* was, *He* is, *He* will be."

The tree of *Tif'eret* is identified with Torah, the Tree of Life. This realm is "tended constantly by" *Binah*, who is referred to (in the verse from Ecclesiastes) as *ha-Elohim, the Elohim*. She is identified here as *Gevurah*, since She is the source of that *sefirah*, while She Herself is emanated from the "infinite and unfathomable" realm of *Ein Sof*. Whereas *ha-Elohim* (*the Elohim*) refers to *Binah*, the name *Elohim* (without the definite article) can refer to *Gevurah* Himself.

Rabbi Yitsḥak construes the word תבונתו (*tevunato*), *His understanding*, in the verse from Isaiah as alluding to בינה (*Binah*), which comes from the same verbal root. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Everything which I command you—that shall you be careful to do. You shall not add to it and you shall not diminish it* [or: *take away from it*]. On the verse from Ecclesiastes, see above, note 288.

292. **Therefore, *ya'aseh, will do*, constantly...** The future tense implies that *Binah* (known as *ha-Elohim*) *will* constantly water and nourish *Tif'eret*. Because the divine tree is so perfect, people will *fear Him* and never betray Him for an alien god.

Apparently, Rabbi Yitsḥak is also implying that in the verse from Isaiah, the third-person subject combined with the future tense (*what He will do for one who awaits Him*) alludes to *Tif'eret*, who *will* constantly reward the faithful. See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For another interpretation, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:357. See above, note 290.

293. **At first, *ya'aseh, will do*...** Rabbi Abba agrees that this future tense implies that *Binah* (known as *ha-Elohim*) *will* constantly tend the tree of *Tif'eret*. But he explains the past tense *asah, has acted* [or: *has made*], as referring to "another tree below it," namely *Shekhinah*, who is identified

with the Tree of Knowledge. This tree, although *made* by *Binah*, will not be nourished constantly by Her—which is why the future tense is not employed here—but rather by *Tif'eret*, "the upper tree."

The spiritual journey begins at the rung of *Shekhinah*, who serves as "the doorkeeper" for *Tif'eret*—whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). So She is "called *Keeper of Israel*." The full verse in Psalms reads: *Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Guardian* [or: *the Keeper*] *of Israel*.

294. **Of this tree...** All of *Shekhinah*'s angelic cohorts nest in Her branches. She is also known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom); and David (the ideal king) is intimately associated with Her, so he called Her גורלי (*gorali*), *my destiny*. In Psalm 16, he addresses *Tif'eret*: *It is You who sustain gorali, my destiny*.

The word *goral* also means "lot," as in the verse from Numbers (quoted above at note 286): על פי הגורל (*Al pi ha-goral*), *According to the lot, shall its inheritance be apportioned, whether many or few*. According to a hyperliteral reading of this verse, *al pi ha-goral* means *by the mouth of the lot*, alluding to a wondrous procedure by which the territories in the land of Canaan were apportioned to each of the tribes. See *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 6: "Miraculous acts occurred in connection with the lot.... As it came up, the lot would cry out, 'I am the lot of such-and-such a tribe, and I have come up to assign him such-and-such a territory!' How do we know that the lot spoke? Because it is written: על פי (*Al pi*), *By the mouth of, the lot* [*shall its inheritance be apportioned*]." See Vol. 8, pp. 145–46, n. 265.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Moses, YHVH's servant, died there in the land of Moab* על פי (*al pi*), *by the word of, YHVH*. According to a similar hyperliteral reading, *al pi YHVH* means *by the mouth of YHVH*, implying that Moses died by a kiss of God. Here, the divine mouth is identified with *Shekhinah*. See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:5; Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128.

295. **Every day they eat sublime food…** Devotees of Torah are nourished by the *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), via *Tif'eret*, who is identified as "Torah on high."

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *The advantage of knowing wisdom* [or: *of wisdom's knowledge*] *keeps its possessors alive*. Here, this verse is understood as *The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom keeps its possessors alive*. See *Zohar* 2:61b–62a; 3:182a.

296. ***There was a sound from above the expanse…*** The context in Ezekiel (1:25–26) describes what the prophet heard and saw above the angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings), who were carrying the Divine Throne: *There was a sound from above the expanse that was over their heads; when they halted, their wings slackened. Above the expanse over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire* [or: *sapphire stone*], *image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a human being upon it above*.

Rabbi Abba apparently identifies the *expanse* with *Shekhinah*, who is joined to *Tif'eret*, known as קול (*qol*), *sound* [or: *voice*]. The word זכר (*zekher*), *a remembrance*, is associated with זכר (*zakhar*), "male," alluding to *Tif'eret*, the Divine Male.

The second day of Creation (involving the division between upper and lower waters) often symbolizes *Gevurah*, who sets limits. Since *Shekhinah* is strongly influenced by *Gevurah*, She shares the identification with the *expanse* created on the second day. The verse in Genesis reads in full: *God said, "Let there be an expanse* [or: *a firmament*] *in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water*."

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu; Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

297. **there are seven expanses…** See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b: "Rabbi Yehudah said, 'There are two רקיעים (*reqi'im*), expanses [or: firmaments, heavens]….' Resh Lakish said, 'Seven, namely וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain; רקיע (*Raqi'a*), Expanse; שחקים (*Sheḥaqim*), Skies; זבול (*Zevul*), Loft; מעון (*Ma'on*), Dwelling;

מכון (*Makhon*), Site [or: Foundation]; ערבות (*Aravot*), Clouds. *Vilon* performs no function at all except entering in the morning and leaving in the evening, and renewing each day the act of Creation.’”

In the *Zohar*, the seven expanses symbolize the seven lower *sefirot*, the last of which is *Shekhinah*, identified with *Vilon*, “Curtain.” The Talmudic wording “Curtain performs no function at all” matches the kabbalistic description of *Shekhinah* as “having nothing of Her own”—only what is emanated to Her by the higher *sefirot*. She is thus described as “poor.” Fittingly, King David (who is intimately linked with *Shekhinah*) refers to his *poverty*.

Shekhinah rules by night, when it “brings forth its forces.” As day begins, *Ḥesed* dominates (along with *Tif’eret*), so *Shekhinah* “gathers them all in.” The verse from Psalms associates morning with חסדך (*ḥasdekha*), *Your kindness*—namely *Ḥesed*—and evening with אמונתך (*emunatekha*), *Your faithfulness*, alluding to *Shekhinah*.

On the seven expanses, see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 37; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 18; *Zohar* 1:32b, 85b–86a; 2:10b, 30b, 56b, 164b; 3:9b, 287a. On *Shekhinah* as *Vilon*, “Curtain,” see *Zohar* 1:207b, 233b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut* 338; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 6, 257; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 12 (15), 50 (61).

On *Shekhinah* as *faith* or *faithfulness*, see above, pp. 403–4, n. 357. The verse in Chronicles reads:… *for the House of YHVH*.

298. **There is *qol, a voice*, above this *expanse…*** *Tif’eret* (described as *qol, a voice*) lies above *Shekhinah*, “this *expanse*.” When the divine *voice* is aroused, *Shekhinah*’s angelic cohorts stand still, awaiting the flow from above. Among these angels are the *ḥayyot* (living beings) described by Ezekiel.

299. ***Above the expanse over their heads…*** For the context in Ezekiel, see above, note 296.

Rabbi Abba associates *sapphire stone* with the phrase *stone of Israel*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, the partner of *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). She is also symbolized by *the stone* mentioned in Genesis. When the Promised Land was to be apportioned to the Israelite tribes, *Shekhinah* (or an aspect of Her) descended and miraculously assigned the territories. See above, note 294.

The context in Genesis (29:2–3) describes Jacob's arrival in Haran: *He looked, and here: a well in the field, and there were three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for from that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and they would put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.* See *Zohar* 2:230a. Cf. 1:151b–152b, 151b–152a (*ST*), ibid. (Tos); 3:62a, 270a.

The verse in Genesis 49 reads: *From there*, רועה (*ro'eh*), *the Shepherd, Stone of Israel*. But Rabbi Abba interprets *ro'eh* as a verb meaning "feeds, grazes," and takes the verse to mean that *Shekhinah* (*Stone of Israel*) *feeds* from the flow above. See *Bahir* 133 (193); *Zohar* 1:146b, 231b, 246b; 2:230a.

300. **from Usha to Lydda...** Usha was a town in Lower Galilee. Lydda (or Lod) is located on the coastal plain. Cf. *Nitsotsei Zohar*, on *Zohar* 2:169b, n. 11.

According to rabbinic tradition, "whoever welcomes [literally: receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*." See *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: "Rabbi Shemu'el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, '... Whoever welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'... Rabbi Yishma'el taught... 'One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* sometimes transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are called

the face of *Shekhinah* "because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment and they are revealed" (2:163b). See above, p. 426, n. 425. On the Companions' running after Rabbi El'azar, cf. *Zohar* 3:79b.

301. **hear something new** On the *Zohar*'s emphasis on innovation, see above, p. 145, n. 282.

302. ***Listen to Me, you who pursue justice…*** צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Justice* [or: *Righteousness*], is a name of *Shekhinah*, who is also known as Faith. By pursuing Her, one can seek *Tif'eret*, known as *YHVH*.

Rabbi El'azar cautions against focusing only on *Shekhinah*, thereby separating Her from Her partner, *Tif'eret*. Through this tragic error, Adam brought death into the world. This type of sin is sometimes referred to as *qitsuts ba-neti'ot*, "severing the saplings." (See above, pp. 7–8, n. 17.) Rather, *Look to the rock from which you were hewn*—apparently alluding to *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, pictured as the Rock of Israel—together with *Shekhinah*, pictured as *the quarry from which you were dug*. For various interpretations of the concluding sentence, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

303. ***My offering, My food…*** This biblical chapter describes the daily, Sabbath, and festival sacrifices, beginning with the *perpetual ascent offering* (Numbers 28:3–8).

See BT *Berakhot* 23a, in the name of Rabba: "Do not be like the fools, who sin and bring an offering and do not engage in *teshuvah*." Cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 7a; Vol. 4, p. 288, n. 321. On the question of whether *shelamim* provide atonement, see BT *Menaḥot* 73b; *Zohar* 3:12a; and *Nitsotsei Zohar*, ad loc., n. 10.

On the perpetual offering's power of atonement, see, e.g., *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:17, in the name of Rabbi Simon: "No one spent a night in Jerusalem with sin in his hand. How so? The morning perpetual offering atoned for transgressions committed by night, and the twilight

perpetual offering atoned for transgressions committed by day. Whatever the case, no one lodged in Jerusalem with sin in his hand." See *Zohar* 1:191a–b.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Command the Children of Israel and say to them, "My offering, My food* [literally: *My bread*]….

304. ***The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit…*** The simple sense of this verse is that rather than sacrifices, what God really desires is genuine repentance. But people do not realize the deeper meaning, which has been revealed by Rabbi Shim'on (known as the Holy Lamp).

See BT *Yoma* 38b–39a: "Resh Lakish said: '… If one comes to defile himself, they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.'… Our rabbis taught: '*Do not become impure with them, becoming impure through them* (Leviticus 11:43). If one defiles himself slightly, he is defiled greatly; [if one defiles himself] below, he is defiled from above; in this world, he is defiled in the world that is coming.' Our rabbis taught: '*You shall hallow yourselves and become holy* (ibid., 44). If one sanctifies himself slightly, he is sanctified greatly; below, he is sanctified from above; in this world, he is sanctified in the world that is coming.'" See above, p. 449, n. 498.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68. On the verse in Psalms, see above, note 164.

305. **When the Temple still existed…** That is, even when sacrifices could be brought, atonement was still not fully granted until the individual turned back to God and broke the proud demonic spirit that had dominated him. It is this impure spirit that is referred to in Psalms 51 as *a broken spirit*.

On the image of dogs in the context of sacrifices, see BT *Yoma* 21b (quoted above, p. 488, n. 628). The full verse in Psalms 78 reads: *He remembers that they are flesh, a spirit* [or: *a breath*] *that goes and does not return*. Cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 78:8.

306. **What is meant by *command?* Idolatry…** Based on a midrashic interpretation, Rabbi Abba associates *command* with "idolatry." See *Bereshit Rabbah* 16:6, where the basic laws of morality are derived from God's command to Adam in the Garden of Eden: "*YHVH Elohim commanded the human, saying, 'From every tree of the garden you may surely eat'* (Genesis 2:16). Rabbi Levi said, 'He issued him six commands. *He commanded*, concerning idolatry, as is said: *For he has keenly gone after human commands* (Hosea 5:11); *YHVH*, concerning blasphemy…; *Elohim*, these are the judges…; *the human*, this is murder…; *saying*, concerning גלוי עריות (*gillui arayot*), exposing nakedness (i.e., illicit sexual intercourse and incest) [as shown by analogy from this proof-text, which mentions sexual immorality]: *Saying: If a man divorces his wife* (Jeremiah 3:1); *From every tree of the garden you may surely eat*, commanding him concerning theft.'" Here, idolatry is identified with the impure spirit.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see BT *Sanhedrin* 56a–b; *Zohar* 1:35b–36a, 60a; 2:83b, 239a–b.

307. ***I have come into my garden, my sister, bride…*** According to a midrashic interpretation, this verse is spoken by God to Israel (His *bride*), and it refers to the Tabernacle (*my garden*) and the incense, sacrifices, and libations. See above, note 177; pp. 431–32, n. 440.

The "six arrangements of sacrifice" refers to the six elements specified in the verse—*myrrh, spice, honeycomb, honey, wine, milk*—which are eventually explained below.

308. **But you concealed it…** By concluding with "and all has been said." On the tension between revealing and concealing, see above, note 257.

309. **Because I saw something in the Book of Enoch…** Rabbi El'azar is hesitant to disclose the contents of this mysterious text. On the Book of Enoch, see above, note 254.

310. **the Garden of Eden, mystery of Assembly of Israel…** Namely, *Shekhinah*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

311. **How do those holy spirits benefit from this?…** That is, how do the angels benefit from sacrifices? And why should sacrifices be brought at all? Wouldn't it be better for a sinner to break the demonic spirit that has taken hold of him? See above at notes 304–5.

On questioning sacrifices, see *Zohar* 1:89b (*ST*). On this passage, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:889–90.

312. **there is an animal crouching on a thousand mountains…** This image derives from the verse in Psalms 50: *For Mine are all animals of the forest*, בהמות (*behemot*), *beasts* [or: *animals*], *on a thousand mountains*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the apparent plural, *behemot*, is actually singular. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10: "Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'It is one animal, crouching on a thousand mountains—and a thousand mountains grow various kinds of vegetation for her and she eats.'… Our Rabbis say, 'It is one animal, crouching on a thousand mountains—and a thousand mountains grow various kinds of animals for her and she eats.'… But is it possible that a grazing animal consumes other grazing animals? Rabbi Tanḥuma said, 'Great are the works of our God! How strange are the works of the blessed Holy One!' From where does she drink? Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish [provided different answers]. Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'All that the Jordan conducts in six months she turns into one gulp.'… Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish said, 'All that the Jordan conducts in twelve months she turns into one gulp.' What is his reason? *Calm while Jordan gushes into his mouth* (Job 40:23)."

Here, the huge crouching animal represents *Shekhinah*, who consumes *animals*—namely fiery angels—daily. See above, p. 272, n. 79. Cf. BT *Yoma* 21b, where the expression "a fire consuming fire" describes *Shekhinah* consuming such

fiery angels. See Vol. 6, p. 299, n. 106. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see BT *Ketubbot* 111b, *Sotah* 14a.

The River Jordan apparently symbolizes *Yesod*, who is filled with the flow of six sefirotic years, namely *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* Himself. The context in Job describes a mythic version of the Egyptian hippopotamus. The verse reads in full: *Look, he empties a river at his ease, calm while Jordan gushes into his mouth*.

313. **The secret of the matter I saw…** In the Book of Enoch. See above at note 309. The angelic *animals* represent the spiritual "essence and element" of earthly animals, to whom they convey a spirit.

314. **that animal spirit ascends…** Returning to its source in the angelic realm. The angels corresponding to the species of the sacrificed animal approach, enjoying "the fat and blood of that spirit's garment"—that is, of the animal's body, which "clothed" the spirit. Having benefited from the offering, these angels become advocates on behalf of the person who brought it.

The esophagus symbolizes a particular class of angels known as אישים (*ishim*), "personages." See above, note 248.

315. ***Your father and your mother will rejoice…*** The continuation of the verse seems redundant: *she who bore you will be glad*. But Rabbi Shim'on explains that the first half of the verse alludes to the divine parents of Rabbi El'azar's soul: *Your father* on high (*Tif'eret*) and Assembly of Israel (*Shekhinah*). The conclusion of the verse—*she who bore you*—refers to Rabbi El'azar's biological mother (Rabbi Shim'on's wife), who is "the daughter of Rabbi Pinḥas" son of Ya'ir.

This interpretation of *father* and *mother* is based on a passage in BT *Berakhot* 35b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa: "Whoever enjoys this world without reciting a blessing—it is as if he robs the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, as is said: *He who robs his father and mother and says, 'It is no crime,' is partner to a destroyer*

(Proverbs 28:24)—*father* is none other than the blessed Holy One… and *mother* is none other than Assembly of Israel."

In this Talmudic passage, Assembly of Israel apparently refers to a supernal hypostasis (the mother of Israel), as it does regularly in Kabbalah, designating *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 2:124b, 193b, 250a (*Heikh*), 262a (*Heikh*); 3:44b, 270b (*Piq*); Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 27. Elsewhere in the *Zohar* (as here), the couple mentioned in Proverbs 23—*Your father and your mother will rejoice*—alludes to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. See 3:55a, 61b, 119a, 156a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 217, 349 (and Wolfson's notes). Cf. *Zohar* 2:82a (*RM*), 84a, 85a, 90a; 3:74a, 77b, 197b, 213a, 277b (*RM*). On the conclusion of the verse in Proverbs 23, see *Zohar* 3:119a, 156a.

In M *Ta'anit* 3:8, the verse in Proverbs 23 is applied to Ḥoni the Circle Drawer [the miracle-worker], who brought rain in a time of drought. See Vol. 7, p. 404, n. 140. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

On Rabbi Pinḥas and his Zoharic role as Rabbi Shim'on's father-in-law, see above, p. 418, n. 402. On Rabbi Pinḥas as חסידא (*ḥasida*), "pious, devout," see above, pp. 422–23, n. 416.

316. **I have not seen…** In the Book of Enoch. See above at notes 309, 313.

317. **four images engraved on the Throne…** Based on the description of Ezekiel, who saw four *ḥayyot* (living beings) carrying the heavenly throne. Each being had four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of a bull on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. See Ezekiel 1:10: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had a bull's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face*. From these four angelic *ḥayyot* spread all other angels.

On the verse in Ezekiel, see above, note 244. On the all-inclusive nature of the human image, see *Zohar* 1:18b–19a, 44a (*Heikh*), 71b; 2:73a (*RR*), 74a, 80b, 178a (*SdTs*), 211b; 3:48a–b, 60b, 118b, 135a (*IR*), 141a–b (*IR*); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 50–51, 53–54. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:1; Vol. 7, p. 303, n. 153; and also the notion of the human as a microcosm (on which see Volume 8, p. 250, n. 2).

318. **From the face of a bull…** A spirit emanates from the angelic face of a bull to various grazing animals on earth. When a grazing animal is sacrificed, angels who themselves spread from the face of a bull approach "their element," namely the spirit released from that particular earthly animal. See above, notes 313–14.

The term "sheep" renders כבשים (*kevasim*), "sheep, young rams." The term "rams" renders עתודים (*attudim*), "male goats or sheep." The "sheep, rams, and goats" mentioned here are not all distinct species, but rather overlapping biblical terms for various grazing animals to be sacrificed.

319. **Just as Holy *Shekhinah* derives pleasure from the spirits of the righteous…** Ascending to Her and stimulating Her passion for *Tif'eret*.

320. **From the face of an eagle …** A spirit emanates from the angelic face of an eagle to various birds.

The alliterative wording in Genesis—עוף יעופף (*of ye'ofef*), *Let fowl fly*—alludes to two sides: right and left. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, this wording alludes specifically to two archangels: Michael and Gabriel.

The eagle can also symbolize *Tif'eret*, who balances *Ḥesed* (on the right) and *Gevurah* (on the left). See *Zohar* 3:298b.

On the verse in Genesis alluding to angels, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:3; *Zohar* 1:12b; 2:239a; cf. *Devarim Rabbah* 8:2. On *of ye'ofef, Let fowl fly*, as alluding to Michael and Gabriel, see *Zohar* 1:46b; 2:239a; Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 1:21; cf. BT *Berakhot* 4b.

321. **the only ones offered from the pure side…** The only birds that can be offered as sacrifices are turtledoves or young pigeons. Both of these belong to the dove family, whose fidelity and gentleness should serve as models for human behavior.

The angels who spread from the angelic face of the eagle approach the sacrificed bird, enjoying the element that originated in the eagle on high. See above, notes 313–14, 318.

See BT *Bava Qamma* 93a, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "A person should always be of the pursued [or: persecuted] and not of the pursuers [or: persecutors], for there is none among the birds more pursued than turtledoves or pigeons, and Scripture declared them fit for the altar." Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:5 (and parallels).

On the dove's faithfulness to its mate, see BT *Eruvin* 100b; Rashi on Psalms 74:19; *Zohar* 3:61a, 125b; *ZḤ* 31c. On turtledoves and young pigeons, see, e.g., Leviticus 1:14: *If his offering to YHVH is an ascent offering of birds, he shall bring forward his offering from the turtledoves or from the young pigeons*. See *Zohar* 2:239a.

322. **How can this pigeon or turtledove spread?…** That is, how can one little bird satisfy countless angels? And similarly, with any sacrificed animal. The "single lamp" may signify the sun.

323. **Until here, from two sides engraved on the Throne…** So far, Rabbi Shim'on has discussed two of the four faces displayed by the *ḥayyot* (living beings): the face of a bull and the face of an eagle, corresponding to sacrifices of grazing animals and of birds. But what about the other two faces: the face of a lion and the face of a human? Why do these faces have no corresponding sacrifices?

Rabbi Shim'on explains that actually both of these images are involved in the sacrificial ritual. According to the Talmud, the image of a lion appeared on the altar in the Temple. See BT *Yoma* 21b: "Five things were reported

about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion, it was as clear as sunlight, its flame was of substance, it devoured wet wood like dry wood, and it caused no smoke to rise." See above, note 244.

Regarding the face of *adam* (a human), when a human confesses his sins over a sacrifice—thereby "offering there his spirit and soul"—then the supernal *Adam* (whose face is displayed by the *ḥayyot* and who is seated on the Divine Throne) benefits from the human's sincere remorse. On the human image that appears seated upon the throne, see Ezekiel 1:26 (quoted above, note 296).

324. **What about the lion?...** How can it partake of any sacrifice, when nothing is offered of its species? Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the lion "is from the right," based on the description in Ezekiel 1:10: *and on the right the four of them had a lion's face* (quoted above, note 317). The right symbolizes *Ḥesed*, which begins (and thereby includes) the emanation of all seven lower *sefirot*, so "the lion is composed of them all," namely of all the other angelic faces. Consequently, the lion consumes from all sacrifices.

325. **to kindle supernal lamps** To illumine the *sefirot*.

326. **The priest and Levites...** Through their ritual service, they stimulate their respective *sefirot*: *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*. On the various "faces" and their corresponding species of sacrifices, see above, notes 317–18, 320–21, 323–24.

327. **The priest, who unifies the Holy Name...** By offering the sacrifice, he unifies the *sefirot*, which are symbolized by the letters of the name *YHVH*. Thereby, the priest approaches *Ḥesed*, pictured as "the supernal Priest," who then enters the realm of *Binah*, described as "the Holy of Holies." As a result, the divine countenance shines upon the human priest. On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

328. **that side of theirs...** *Gevurah*, on the left.

329. **for their prayer is over all…** This may mean that their prayer is uttered "over all" the sacrifices. According to *Or Yaqar*, it means that their prayer is more praiseworthy than the rituals of both the priests and Levites.

In midrashic literature the title "Israel the Elder" refers to Israel the patriarch (Jacob), as opposed to the people Israel. In the *Zohar*, "Israel the Elder" designates *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). See above, p. 481, n. 601.

The phrase "the holy seal" apparently alludes to "truth," since according to rabbinic tradition, "The seal of the blessed Holy One is truth." In Kabbalah "truth" is associated with *Tif'eret*. On truth as God's seal, see JT *Sanhedrin* 1:1, 18a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 81:2; BT *Shabbat* 55a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:10; *Shemot Rabbah* 4:13.

330. **rungs engraved on the Throne…** The images of the angelic *ḥayyot* are aroused toward their respective corresponding sacrificial animals on earth, and more concealed rungs also approach the sacrificial meal. But none of them is allowed to partake of the sacrifice until the Divine King "eats and enjoys."

331. ***I have plucked my myrrh with my spice…*** Alluding to *Ḥesed* (the divine right arm) and *Hod* (the divine left thigh).

In midrashic literature *myrrh* is associated with Abraham, who in Kabbalah symbolizes *Ḥesed*. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:6; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 4. The element of *spice* suggests incense, associated with Aaron, who symbolizes *Hod*. On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, notes 177, 307; pp. 431–32, n. 440.

332. ***I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey…*** Alluding to the sweet union of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Rachel). On eating as a

metaphor for sexual union, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 70:4; Vol. 3, p. 506, n. 911.

333. ***I have drunk my wine with my milk…*** Alluding to *Gevurah* (the divine left arm) and *Netsaḥ* (the divine right thigh). In the *Zohar, wine* is often associated with *Gevurah*, and milk with *Ḥesed* on the right (above *Netsaḥ*).

334. **all those who spread out from them…** Countless lower angels.

335. **bowed down before him…** That is, before Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

On Rabbi Shim'on as the source of Torah, cf. *Zohar* 3:287a. Cf. the Passover Haggadah: "If He had brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah, it would have been enough for us." See also the statement attributed to Rabbi Akiva (in *Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim*, 5): "If the Torah had not been given, the Song of Songs would have been adequate to conduct the world." On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

336. **a person is forbidden to taste anything…** Before praying, which takes the place of sacrifice. Just as sacrifice nourishes the Divine King and stimulates sefirotic union, so does prayer.

Prayer proceeds in a manner similar to sacrifice. First, one invites the angelic *ḥayyot*, presiding over their respective earthly animals, whom they have animated with spirits. (See above, notes 317–18, 320–21.) The line "and the *ophanim* and holy *ḥayyot*" appears in the morning liturgy. (See above, note 179.) The phrase "all those other forces" refers to lower angels.

On not eating before prayer, see BT *Berakhot* 10b; Vol. 8, p. 50, n. 141. The full verse in Psalms reads: *How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom; the earth is filled with Your riches*. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

337. **Afterward, the high priest…** The priestly ritual of sacrifice unifies the *sefirot* (symbolized by the letters of the name *YHVH*). Since the priest symbolizes *Ḥesed* (Love), his ritual corresponds to the paragraph preceding the *Shema* in the morning service, which begins (in the Sephardic liturgy): *Ahavat olam* (With eternal love). The priest's unification of the *sefirot* matches the unification of the opening line of the *Shema: Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*.

The Levites, who sang melodies in the Temple, symbolize *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). This divine quality corresponds to the second paragraph of the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 11:13–21), which includes a list of potential punishments.

The Israelites symbolize *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), known as Israel the Elder. They correspond to the prayer following the *Shema*, which begins "True and certain," since the word "true" is associated with *Tif'eret*.

On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60. On the prayer *Ahavat olam*, see BT *Berakhot* 11b; *Zohar* 2:202b, and *Nitsotsei Zohar*, ad loc., n. 5. On the significance of the *Shema*, see above, p. 377, n. 271. On the term "Israel the Elder," see above, p. 481, n. 601.

The context in Deuteronomy (11:13, 16–17) reads: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands that I command you today, to love YHVH your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.... Take care, lest your heart be seduced, so that you turn aside and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the wrath of YHVH will flare against you, and He will shut the heavens so that there will be no rain and the earth will not yield her fruit, and you will perish quickly from the good land that YHVH is giving you*.

338. **the first three blessings and the last three blessings…** Of the *Amidah*, the central prayer, at the

conclusion of which the divine couple consummate their union.

339. **Then, this *adam*, human...** Following the *Amidah*, one recites *Taḥanun* (Supplication). This prayer (recited on most weekdays) includes a confession of sins and a petition for grace. It is also known as *nefilat appayim* (falling upon the face; prostration), and originally it was recited in this position, though later it became customary to recite *Taḥanun* in a seated (or half-seated) posture with lowered head and one's face buried in the bend of the arm. Here, the *Zohar* reflects the Sephardic version of *Taḥanun*, which features Psalm 25.

The *adam* (human) who is praying surrenders his spirit to the supernal "*Adam* who is engraved on those images"—that is, whose face is displayed by the *ḥayyot* (and who is seated on the Divine Throne). The image of *adam*—both of the human *adam* and the supernal *Adam*—includes all images.

See above, notes 317, 323. On *Taḥanun* and *nefilat appayim*, see *Zohar* 3:120b–121a; Vol. 8, pp. 279–80, n. 94. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:970; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 51; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

340. **Three other images...** Namely, the faces of a lion, bull, and eagle. (See above, note 317.)

Psalm 145 is recited after *Taḥanun*. The four clauses quoted here represent the praises chanted by the four *ḥayyot* carrying the Divine Throne. Psalms 145:7 reads: *The fame of Your great goodness they will utter, and of Your beneficence they will joyously sing*. Verse 11 reads: *Of the glory of Your kingdom they will talk, and of Your might they will speak*.

341. **a person should express the distress in his heart...** Since now that all the heavenly forces have been nourished and are satisfied, they became advocates on behalf of the person praying. See above, note 314.

On the association of the verse in Psalm 20 with a woman in labor, see *Midrash Tehillim* 20:1.

342. **Rabbi Shim'on was traveling to Tiberias…** According to rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on purified Tiberias. See Vol. 7, p. 487, n. 420.

Rabbi Shim'on asks Elijah what topic God is discussing in the Heavenly Academy, where He teaches Torah to the souls of the righteous. See above, p. 54, n. 1.

343. **is saying new words in your name…** God is conveying the insights of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai concerning the sacrifices to the members of the Heavenly Academy.

A difficult question has been posed there. According to rabbinic tradition, "In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking." In Kabbalah "the world that is coming" refers to *Binah*, who nourishes all the lower *sefirot*, and fittingly this nourishment cannot be described as physical eating or drinking. Yet, according to Kabbalah, the verse in Song of Songs is spoken by *Tif'eret* to *Shekhinah*. How can *Tif'eret* (who is spiritually nourished by *Binah*) say *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine?*

See BT *Berakhot* 17a: "A pearl in the mouth of Rav: 'In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking or procreation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition; rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*.'"

On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked* [or: *gathered*] *my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* According to a midrashic interpretation, this verse is spoken by God to Israel (His *bride*), and it refers to the Tabernacle (*my garden*) and the incense, sacrifices, and libations. See above, note 177; pp. 431–32, n. 440. On this

paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:927; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

344. **How deeply the blessed Holy One loves the Assembly of Israel!...** *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is so in love with *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) that He abandons His normal behavior and partakes of the sacrifices and libations that have been offered by Israel to *Shekhinah*.

345. **We learn from David...** King David invited King *Tif'eret* and His Queen (or *Matronita*), *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the Ark).

See *Zohar* 1:148a–b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 232–33. Cf. *Zohar* 1:36a. On David bringing the ark to the City of David, see 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15.

346. **He changed the vestments...** The term צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness* [or: *justice*], refers to *Shekhinah*, who is influenced by *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—on the left, symbolized by the Levites. Yet David said *May Your priests* (who symbolize *Ḥesed* on the right) *don righteousness*.

There is a similar problem with the continuation of the verse: וחסידיך ירננו (*Va-ḥasidekha yerannenu*), *And may Your faithful sing for joy*. David should have said *And may Your Levites sing for joy*, since they (who are on the left) are the ones who sang in the Temple—not the priests, who are associated with *Ḥesed* on the right and are thus called *ḥasidekha, Your faithful*.

See *Zohar* 1:148a–b. Psalms 132:10 reads in full: *For the sake of David Your servant, do not turn away Your anointed*.

347. **that guest should do as the host wishes...** See BT *Pesaḥim* 86b, in the name of Rav Huna: "Whatever the host tells you, do, unless he says, 'Get out!'"

348. ***He took of the stones of the place...*** The full verse (describing Jacob's journey to Haran) reads: *He encountered a certain place and spent the night there, for*

the sun had set, and he took of the stones of the place, which he placed at his head, and he lay down in that place.

According to Rabbi Shim'on, Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who came to unite with *Shekhinah* (*a certain place, the place*, soon named Bethel, "House of God"). See *Zohar* 1:49b, 148b. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Beha'alotekha* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beha'alotekha* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 15:8. See also BT *Sanhedrin* 7a.

349. **even though this is not His custom...** Although *Tif'eret* is normally nourished by the purely spiritual flow of emanation, now, out of love for *Shekhinah*, He partakes of the sacrifices offered to Her. The phrase "only in the house of the Bride" apparently refers to the Temple. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:929; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

350. **The angels whom the blessed Holy One sent to Abraham...** To announce the miraculous conception and birth of Isaac. See Genesis 18. According to Genesis 18:8, Abraham *was standing over them under the tree, and they ate*.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 48:14, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "A proverb: 'If you enter a town, follow its customs.' Above, where there is no eating, when Moses ascended he appeared like them: *I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights*, [*no bread did I eat nor water did I drink*] (Deuteronomy 9:9). Below, where there is eating: *He was standing by them under the tree, and they ate* (Genesis 18:8). But did they really eat? Rather, they appeared to be eating, each course disappearing in turn."

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 86b; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 11; *Shemot Rabbah* 47:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:5; *Zohar* 1:102a, 144a.

351. **This very thing the blessed Holy One wished to say...** God Himself conceived this same interpretation of the verse in Song of Songs, but rather than taking credit for it Himself in the presence of *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), he deferred to Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai. See

above, page 615: “The blessed Holy One said, ‘Let the son of Yoḥai speak!’”

The full verse in Samuel reads: *The God of Israel has said, to me the Rock of Israel has spoken: He who rules humanity,* צדיק מושל יראת אלהים (*tsaddiq moshel yir’at Elohim*), *just* [or: *justly*], *who rules* [*in*] *the awe of God*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the conclusion of the verse means: *The righteous one rules the awe of God*. See BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 16b, where Rabbi Abbahu conveys this sense of the verse and quotes God as saying: “I rule over humanity. Who rules over Me? The righteous one. For I issue a decree and he abolishes it.” In the *Zohar, Shekhinah* is called *the awe of God*.

See *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 33:1; *Midrash Shemu’el* 29:2; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tavo* 1; *Devarim Rabbah* 10:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:20; *Zohar* 1:10a, 45b (*Heikh*); 2:15a (*MhN*), 201a, 262a (*Heikh*); 3:15a. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 63a, *Bava Metsi’a* 85a; *Rut Zuta* 2:19; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:6; *Zohar* 1:209a; 3:68a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

352. ***My offering, My food…*** The full verse reads: *Command the Children of Israel and say to them, “My offering, My food, for My fire offerings, My pleasing aroma, take care to offer to Me at its set time*.” See above, note 303.

Smoke refers to wrathful forces, who derive enjoyment from the smoke of the sacrificial offerings. The *aroma* refers to beneficent forces, sweet as apples. Rabbi Yehudah is apparently implying that these angelic forces derive from the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, whose respective colors all appear in the apple: the white pulp, the red skin, and the green stem.

On the image of apples, see above, p. 459, n. 532. The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For then* יעשן אף יהוה וקנאתו (*ye’shan af YHVH ve-qin’ato*), *YHVH’s nose* [or: *wrath*] *and His jealousy shall smoke* [or: *shall smolder*].

353. **Like apples…** Rabbi Abba prefers not to directly identify the beneficent forces with the divine apples.

The verse in Song of Songs reads: *the scent* [or: *the aroma*] *of your nose* כתפוחים (*katappuḥim*). In biblical Hebrew, תפוח (*tappuaḥ*) probably means "apricot," whereas in later Hebrew it means "apple" (which is not native to Palestine).

354. ***One lamb you shall perform in the morning…*** The full verse (describing the daily offering) reads: *One lamb you shall perform* [or: *offer*] *in the morning, and the second lamb you shall perform at twilight*.

The morning alludes to the streaming light of *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham, who *rose early in the morning*; so this *sefirah* is called "the Morning of Abraham."

The full verse in Genesis 44 describes the departure of Joseph's brothers from Egypt: *The morning was light* [or: *had just brightened*], *and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys*. Here, Rabbi El'azar emphasizes the definite article in the phrase *the morning*, insisting that this refers not to just any *morning*, but to *Ḥesed*, "the Morning of Abraham," which is identified with the primordial light of Creation. The daily morning offering corresponds to this *sefirah*.

See BT *Berakhot* 26b: "Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina said, 'The patriarchs instituted the prayers.'… Abraham instituted the morning prayer…. Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer…. Jacob instituted the evening prayer." See JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a–b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16.

On Abraham, *Ḥesed*, and morning, see above, p. 319, n. 70. On the verse in Genesis 44, see p. 321, n. 76. On the primordial light, see above, note 168.

355. **The sacrifice at twilight—Isaac…** This patriarch symbolizes *Gevurah*, whose dominion grows as the day begins to darken; so this *sefirah* is called "the Evening of Isaac." The daily twilight offering corresponds to his *sefirah*.

The verse in Genesis reads: *Isaac went out* לשוח (*la-suaḥ*), *to meditate* [or: *to stroll*], *in the field as evening turned*. Traditionally this verse is cited to prove that Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer—associated here with late afternoon and twilight. See BT *Berakhot* 26b (quoted in the preceding note): "Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer, as is said: *Isaac went out to meditate in the field as evening turned*."

356. ***And a tenth of an ephah…*** The full verse describes the grain offering that accompanied the offering of a lamb each morning and evening: *And a tenth of an ephah of semolina as a grain offering, mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil*.

The fraction *a tenth* alludes to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), last of the ten *sefirot*. The daily grain offering stimulates Her embrace by the two divine arms, *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*.

Shekhinah is associated with bread made from "the seven species" of grain. Whereas other varieties of plants are supervised by angels, "the seven species" are supervised directly by the blessed Holy One, partner of *Shekhinah*.

The term “the seven species” apparently includes “the five species” of grain often referred to in rabbinic literature (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye) plus rice and millet. See M *Ḥallah* 1:1, *Pesaḥim* 2:5; *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 8; BT *Berakhot* 35b, 36b–37b; above, p. 138, n. 260; *Or Yaqar*. Cf. Deuteronomy 8:8, which lists seven species of grain and fruit.

On *Shekhinah* as bread, see, e.g., *Zohar* 1:245b–246a. On God’s direct control of grain, cf. BT *Berakhot* 55a.

357. **if anyone shows contempt for bread…** A particular angel will impose poverty upon him.

According to the simple sense of the verse in Job, the question *where is it?* refers to the bread that cannot be found. Rabbi El’azar construes this question as *where is he?* referring to the absence of anyone who will show compassion on such a wasteful person.

On the link between leaving crumbs and poverty, and on the angel of poverty, see BT *Pesaḥim* 111b; *Ḥullin* 105b. Cf. *Zohar* 1:14b.

358. **three who inflict evil upon themselves…** By their actions in this world. Two of these suffer the consequences while still alive, whereas the third is punished in the afterlife.

If a person curses himself, heavenly forces will seize his words and ensure that his curse is fulfilled. See *Zohar* 1:14b; 2:266a (*Heikh*); 3:155b. Cf. M *Shevu’ot* 4:13: “One who curses himself or his neighbor by any of them [any of the divine names] violates a negative commandment.” BT *Shevu’ot* 36a adds the verse: *But take care, take exceeding care for your self* (Deuteronomy 4:9), implying that such a curse is dangerous.

See also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 15:7; *Rut Rabbah* 1:3. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 19a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: “One should never open his mouth for Satan,” i.e., one should never utter ominous words, thereby providing an opening for

Satan and inviting disaster. On “three who inflict evil upon themselves,” see *Zohar* 1:14b.

359. **Whom do we have greater than Moses?...** After Israel had sinned in the incident of the Golden Calf, Moses pleaded with God to spare them, saying *Now, if You would bear their sin! And if not, please wipe me out from Your book that You have written*. Even though Moses uttered this in order to save Israel, he was still punished for cursing himself. The punishment consisted of Moses’ name being “wiped out” from the Torah portion *Tetsavveh* (Exodus 27:20–30:10), which describes the perpetual light in the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), the priestly vestments, the installation of the priests, and the incense altar. This is the only Torah portion from the beginning of Exodus until Deuteronomy in which Moses’ name is not mentioned.

On Moses’ name being “wiped out” from the Torah portion *Tetsavveh*, see *Da’at Zeqenim mi-Ba’alei ha-Tosafot* on Exodus 32:32; *ZḤ* 60c (*MhN, ShS*); Asher ben Yeḥiel and *Ba’al ha-Turim* on Exodus 27:20; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 32:32; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:55, n. 284; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 27:20, n. 71. On the wording “Whom do we have greater than Moses?” see M *Sotah* 1:9.

360. **Whom do we have greater than King David?...** Yet even he had to be wary of *the wicked* heavenly official who is poised to snatch any curse and fulfill it.

361. **Another—one who throws bread...** Another person who inflicts harm upon himself is one who throws away bread. See above, note 357. The phrase “in this world” means “during their lifetime.”

362. **Another, in that world...** The third type of person who inflicts harm upon himself suffers the consequences in the afterlife. This is someone who kindles fire prematurely as Sabbath is departing.

The phrase “the Hallowing of the Portion” renders דסדרא קדושא (*qedusha de-sidra*), a version of the *Qedushah* in Hebrew

and Aramaic that is usually included in the prayer לציון גואל ובא (*U-va le-tsiyyon go'el*), *A redeemer will come to Zion* (Isaiah 59:20). Originally recited after studying passages from the Prophets following daily prayer, this *qedushah* appears in the liturgy near the end of the morning service, on Sabbath afternoon, and at the close of Sabbath, following the evening prayer. See BT *Sotah* 49a, and Rashi, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:14b; Ta-Shma, *Minhag Ashkenaz ha-Qadmon*, 217–20.

According to *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 33, one of the dwellers in Hell reports: "Whoever does not observe the Sabbath properly [*Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5: "willingly"] in your world comes here and observes it against his will. … All week long we are punished, and on the Sabbath we rest—and [we continue resting] as Sabbath departs until the portions [i.e., *Qedusha de-Sidra*, "the Hallowing of the Portion"] have been completed. Once they are completed, an angel named Dumah, appointed over souls, comes and takes the souls of those people [i.e., our souls] and slings them…."

By lighting a lamp before the completion of *Qedusha de-Sidra*, one cuts short the Sabbath rest of the sinners in Hell and returns them to their suffering prematurely.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 65b; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23, 120a; *Zohar* 1:14b, 17b, 41a (*Heikh*), 48a, 62b, 197b, 237b; 2:31b, 88b, 100a, 130a, 136a, 150b–151a, 203b, 207a; 3:94b, 105a, 145a (*IR*), 288b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 17a–b (*MhN*), 79b (*MhN*).

363. **'This is the place of so-and-so'…** Namely, of the person who kindled fire prematurely as the Sabbath was departing. Fittingly, he himself will be cast into Hell.

The context in Isaiah (22:17–18) reads: *YHVH is about to hurl you with a mighty hurl, winding you round and round. He will surely wrap you up as a turban, a ball off to a vast land! There shall you die, and there shall be your chariots of honor, O shame of your master's house!*

364. ***Semolina as a grain offering…*** As mentioned above (note 356), the full verse describes the grain offering that accompanied the offering of a lamb each morning and

evening: *And a tenth of an ephah of semolina as a grain offering, mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil*.

The fine semolina flour alludes to *Shekhinah*. By bringing this daily grain offering, one brings Her before King *Tif'eret*, who embraces Her with His two arms, *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*.

365. **that oil flowing forth from above** The rich flow of emanation streaming to *Shekhinah*.

366. **since it is *oil*, why *beaten?*...** This alludes to the union of *Yesod* (the divine phallus) with *Shekhinah* (the Female). *Yesod* must extract and draw the flowing "anointing oil" from each of the sefirotic limbs (pictured as olives). The word *beaten* describes His intense effort.

367. **to enjoy and be nourished** So that the Female, *Shekhinah*, may enjoy and be nourished.

368. ***A fourth of a hin*...** Alluding to *Shekhinah*, who represents the fourth leg of the Throne, whose other legs are *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. Together, these four *sefirot* constitute a throne for the highest level of Divinity (or they support *Binah*, who constitutes that Throne). See above, p. 211, n. 70. For the full verse, see above, note 364.

369. **On Sabbath, doubly...** According to Numbers 28:9–10, on Sabbath two lambs were offered (along with their grain offerings and libations), in addition to the daily offering.

370. ובראשי חדשיכם **(*Uv-rashei ḥodsheikhem*), *On the heads of your new moons*...** The phrase *uv-rashei ḥodsheikhem* means literally *on the heads of your months*, that is, *on your new moons*. Based on the fact that the word חדש (*ḥodesh*) itself can mean not only "month" but also "new moon," Rabbi Shim'on reads the phrase hyperliterally: *on the heads of your new moons*. The moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who apparently has only one head—namely *Tif'eret* (symbolized by both the sun and Jacob), who illumines Her. However, *Yesod* (symbolized by Joseph) can also be pictured as Her head. Together, these two sefirotic *heads* renew *Shekhinah*, and in the process they themselves are renewed.

On the similarity between Jacob and Joseph (and the coordination between their respective *sefirot*), see Vol. 6, p. 402, n. 412. The context in Numbers (28:11–15) reads: ובראשי חדשיכם (*Uv-rashei ḥodsheikhem*), *On your new moons* [literally: *On the heads of your months*], *you shall present an ascent offering to YHVH, two bulls from the herd and one ram, seven unblemished yearling lambs. And three-tenths of semolina, a grain offering mingled with oil for each bull, and two-tenths of semolina, a grain offering mingled with oil for the one ram. And one-tenth of semolina each, a grain offering mingled with oil for every lamb—an ascent offering, a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to YHVH. And their libations: there will be half a hin for the bull and a third of a hin for the ram and a quarter of a hin for the lamb—wine. This is the ascent offering for each successive new moon, for the months of the year. And one goat will be performed as a purification offering* [or: *a sin offering*] *to YHVH* [or: *for YHVH*], *in addition to the perpetual ascent offering and its libation*.

371. **So, to renew Her—*two bulls from the herd*…** The offering prescribed for the new moon is intended to renew *Shekhinah*. The *two bulls* represent *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*.

The concluding sentence alludes to a rabbinic legend about the creation of the sun and the moon. See BT *Ḥullin* 60b: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi pointed out a contradiction. 'It is written: *God made the two great lights* (Genesis 1:16), and it is written [in the same verse]: *the greater light… and the lesser light*. The moon said before the blessed Holy One, "Master of the Universe! Is it possible for two kings to wield one crown? [i.e., How can both of us be *great*?]" He answered, "Go, diminish yourself!" She said before Him, "Master of the Universe! Because I have suggested something proper I should diminish myself?" He replied, "Go and rule by day and night." She said, "But what is the value of this? What good is a lamp at noon?"… Seeing that her mind was uneasy [that she could not be consoled], the blessed Holy One said, "Bring an atonement for Me

because I diminished the moon."' As was said by Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: 'Why is the goat offered on the new moon distinguished by the phrase *for* *YHVH* (Numbers 28:15)? The blessed Holy One said, "Let this goat be an atonement for My having diminished the moon."'"

In this Talmudic passage, the moon's rhetorical question—"Is it possible for two kings to wield one crown?"—means "How can both the sun and I be *great*?" Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes the question as meaning "How can both *Tif'eret* and *Yesod* illumine Me [namely the moon]?" In order to enable both of them to renew and illumine Her, *Shekhinah* "diminished Herself beneath them."

On the Talmudic passage, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 6:3; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 6, 51; *Zohar* 1:19b–20a, 181a–b; 2:138a, 144b, 147b–148a, 219b; 3:38b, 79b, 271b (*Piq*); *ZḤ* 14a (*MhN*), 70d–71a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 189; idem; *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 90–91. On the new-moon offering of the goat, see also *Zohar* 1:64a, 65a, 122b, 138b; 2:33a, 185a, 238a, 269a; below at notes 376–78; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:893. For the context in Numbers 28, see the preceding note.

372. ***And one ram*—the ram of Isaac...** The *ram* (included in the new-moon offering) represents the ram substituted at the last moment for Isaac when he was about to be sacrificed by Abraham (see Genesis 22:13), and Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah*.

Why isn't Abraham (symbolizing *Ḥesed*) represented in the new-moon offering? Because demonic forces (represented by Esau) are aroused to take their share of the offering, and therefore Abraham withdraws so that Esau (and his demonic forces) will not be able to see him or derive any benefit from *Ḥesed*. Esau's share of the offering is the שָׂעִיר (*sa'ir*), "goat," mentioned in Numbers 28:15: עִזִּים וּשְׂעִיר (*u-s'ir izzim*), *And one goat, will be performed as a sin offering* [or: *a purification offering*] *to* *YHVH* [or: *for* *YHVH*]. This *sa'ir* corresponds to Esau, who is described as איש שעיר

(*ish sa'ir*), *a hairy man* (Genesis 27:11). Furthermore, Esau's descendants dwelled in Edom, known as שֵׂעִיר (*se'ir*), "Seir."

Whereas Abraham (and his *sefirah*) withdraws, Isaac (and his *sefirah*) are found there because of Isaac's love for his firstborn son, Esau. (See Genesis 25:28: *Isaac loved Esau for the game in his mouth* [or: *because he brought game for his mouth, because he had a taste for game*], *but Rebekah loved Jacob*.) Also present are Jacob and Joseph, representing *Tif'eret* and *Yesod* (symbolized by the *two bulls* offered on the new moon). Jacob (and his *sefirah*) will smash his brother Esau's demonic power, while Joseph (as *Yesod*, partner of *Shekhinah*) is Esau's nemesis, protecting *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Rachel) from Esau's advances.

Wine ages best on its sediment (or lees, dregs). Here, the expression "like wine on its dregs" refers to Isaac and his *sefirah* (*Gevurah*, on the left)—pictured as wine—settling on Esau, who represents the demonic dregs deriving from the left side. The expression originates in BT *Megillah* 12b: "like wine that has settled on its lees," which in turn is based on the description of Moab in Jeremiah 48:11: *He is settled on his lees*. See *Zohar* 1:216b; 2:87a; 3:128b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*); *ZḤ* 72d (*ShS*), 75a (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:191a; 3:172a.

In rabbinic literature Esau (or Edom) often represents Rome, and in medieval literature he often represents Christendom or Christian rule. On Joseph protecting Rachel from Esau, see above, pp. 433–34, nn. 448–49. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 370.

373. ***Seven lambs…*** The conclusion of this verse reads: *seven unblemished yearling lambs*. This portion of the new-moon offering symbolizes seven aspects of *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the moon). For the context in Numbers, see above, note 370.

374. **בני שנה (*Benei shanah*), *Offspring of a year…*** The conclusion of the verse reads: *seven unblemished yearling lambs* [or: *seven unblemished lambs, offspring of a year*]. See above, note 370.

Shekhinah (symbolized by the moon) is also called שנה (*shanah*), *year*, since She is one of the seven lower *sefirot*, known as Primordial Years. This phrase appears in Malachi 3:4: *The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to YHVH as in days of antiquity* וכשנים קדמניות (*ukh-shanim qadmoniyyot*), *and as in former* [or: *primordial*] *years*. See *Zohar* 1:7b, 238b; 2:105b; 3:138b (*IR*).

375. ***And three-tenths* [*of semolina*]...** The verse reads: *And three-tenths of semolina, a grain offering mingled with oil for each bull*. See above, note 370.

The measure *three-tenths* alludes to the three highest aspects of *Shekhinah*, each with ten facets. Similarly, each of the higher *sefirot* includes ten facets. According to *Miqdash Melekh*, the concluding sentence explains why only *three-tenths of semolina* are offered. Since each of *Shekhinah*'s first three rungs includes ten aspects, one might expect *thirty-tenths*; but the term *tenths* dictates "one part in ten," so only *three-tenths* are brought.

376. ***And a goat* חטאת (*ḥattat*), *as a sin offering*...** The term חטאת (*ḥattat*) can mean either *a sin offering* (or *a purification offering*) or *a sin*. Although, of course, the simple sense in this verse is *a sin offering* (or *a purification offering*), Rabbi Shim'on focuses on the meaning *sin*, since this goat is intended to assuage and preoccupy the "sinful" demonic force, deriving from the left side.

On the general theme of assuaging demonic powers, see above, p. 436, n. 456. On the new-moon offering of the goat, see above, note 371. The full verse in Numbers reads slightly differently than quoted above: *And one goat will be performed* לחטאת (*le-ḥattat*), *as a purification offering* [or: *a sin offering*], *to YHVH* [or: *for YHVH*], *in addition to the perpetual ascent offering and its libation*. See above, note 370.

377. **Yet we have learned that it is written** ליהוה **(*la-YHVH*), *to YHVH*...** The verse states explicitly that the goat is to be offered *la-YHVH*, *to YHVH*, so how can it be "from the side

of *sin*" or intended for the demonic force? Rabbi El'azar explains that it is indeed offered *la-YHVH*—meaning *for YHVH*, so as *to effect purgation*. In order to do so, a portion must be given to Samael, assuaging him and thereby breaking his power, so that he will not approach *Shekhinah* (symbolized by "the Sanctuary") or accuse Israel.

See the preceding note. Numbers 28:22 (actually describing part of the Passover offering) reads in full: *And one goat for a sin offering* [or: *a purification offering*], *to atone* [or: *to make expiation*; *to effect purgation*] *for you*.

378. **Were it not for the diminishment of the moon...** As described in the Talmudic passage quoted above (note 371).

Samael approaches *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon), seeking to suckle from Her and imbibe power for his people (namely Israel's enemies, or specifically Christendom). By offering him (part of) this goat, Israel assuages and distracts him. This goat is offered to Samael, but *la-YHVH, for YHVH*—atoning, as it were, for God's act of diminishing the moon. See the conclusion of the Talmudic passage: "'Seeing that her mind was uneasy [that she could not be consoled], the blessed Holy One said, "Bring an atonement for Me because I diminished the moon."'... 'Why is the goat offered on the new moon distinguished by the phrase *la-YHVH, for YHVH*? The blessed Holy One said, "Let this goat be an atonement for My having diminished the moon."'"

379. **We have found in the Book of Enoch...** In this venerable text, Enoch draws an analogy between the new-moon offering of a goat and the offering brought by a woman when she is purified from her monthly menstruation.

As each month begins, *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) approaches Her Husband, *Tif'eret*, and a portion is given to Samael to assuage and preoccupy him, so that he will not interfere with the divine union.

The phrase “from its own kind” alludes to the שעיר (*sa’ir*), “goat,” based on the association of *sa’ir* with Esau (see above, note 372) or on a related sense of *sa’ir*: “satyr, demon.” On the goat-demons, see Leviticus 17:7; *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 9:8, 84a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:8; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1462. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 9:3.

On the Book of Enoch, see above, note 254. On the *Zohar*’s attitude toward menstruation, see Koren, *Forsaken: The Menstruant in Medieval Jewish Mysticism*. On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see above, p. 389, n. 307.

380. **What is that portion?…** According to rabbinic law, for seven days following the cessation of menstrual flow, a married woman must immerse in the *miqveh* (ritual bath) before marital relations can resume. It was customary for the woman to pare her nails before immersing. Here Rabbi El’azar refers as well to her cutting a bit of her hair. She should then tie up the fingernail clippings with the hair and leave the wrapped present for the Other Side in a safely concealed place.

See BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 18a: “Three things have been said regarding nails: One who buries them is righteous; one who burns them is חסיד (*ḥasid*), devout [i.e., even holier]; one who throws them away is wicked. What is the reason? Lest a pregnant woman step over them and miscarry.”

See BT *Niddah* 17a. On the danger of throwing away nail parings, see also *Zohar* 2:172b, 208b; 3:79a–b. On the negative or demonic aspect of human nails, see also *Zohar* 1:20b–21a; 2:76a, 172b, 208b; 3:60b; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 219–22. On the menstruant paring her nails, see Eleazar of Worms, *Roqeaḥ, Hilkhot Miqveh* 376; Asher ben Yeḥiel, *Massekhet Niddah, Hilkhot Miqva’ot* 35; Jacob ben Asher, *Arba’ah Turim, Yoreh De’ah* 198; *Zohar* 3:79a–b. Cf. *Zohar* 3:70a. On the menstruant cutting her hair, see *Zohar* 3:79a, 127a.

381. ***In the first month*** The full verse reads: *In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, a Passover*

offering to YHVH.

382. ***As a hart craves for streams of water…*** The term איל (*ayyal*) means *hart* (a male deer), whereas the term אילת (*ayyelet*) means *hind* (a female deer). Yet in the verse from Psalms 42, the masculine noun *ayyal* is paired with the feminine verb תערג (*ta'arog*), [*she*] *craves*, rather than the expected masculine verbal form יערוג (*ya'arog*), [*he*] *craves*.

The double-gendered clause כאיל תערג (*ke-ayyal ta'arog*), *as a hart craves*, reflects the dual nature of *Shekhinah*. She is often referred to as *ayyelet* (*hind*), but being the spouse of *Tif'eret*, She also shares some aspects of His masculine nature, so in this verse She is called *ayyal* (*hart*), although Her yearning for water is still rendered by the feminine verbal form *ta'arog*, [*she*] *craves*.

On the double gender of the verse in Psalms 42, see *Midrash Tehillim* 42:1; Rashi on Psalms 42:2; *Zohar* 2:219b; Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §122f. The verse reads: תערג כאיל (*Ke-ayyal ta'arog*), *As a hart craves* [or: *yearns, pants*] *for streams of water*….

383. **אילת (*ayyelet*), *the hind of, dawn…*** *Shekhinah* journeys to the sefirotic heights and brings back nourishment for all of Her angelic cohorts.

On the hind as the most compassionate animal, see *Midrash Tehillim* 22:14; 42:1. On *Shekhinah* as *the hind* [or: *doe*] *of dawn*, see above, p. 320, n. 73. On *Shekhinah* as a cosmic animal, see above, note 67.

384. **You who are near…** The forces of holiness, who are about to conduct the world during daytime. The converse description ("you who are far") refers to harsh forces of Judgment, who prevailed through the night.

385. ***When the sun rises, they gather…*** The verse concludes: *and in their dens they crouch*.

Since *Shekhinah* distributes food in the morning, She is called *ayyelet, the hind of, dawn*. After being empowered in the higher realms (as described below), She is called *ayyal, a hart*. See above, note 382.

386. **Where does She go?...** *Shekhinah* journeys through six sefirotic realms. The Mountain of Darkness represents the harsh realm of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). There *Shekhinah* encounters the demonic serpent, who derives from *Din* and seeks to suck nourishment from Her. The Mountain of Light represents *Ḥesed*.

387. **When the world needs rain...** Such drought is caused by an interruption of the flow of emanation. *Shekhinah* then cries out to the blessed Holy One, and the blessed flow resumes.

According to *Zohar* 3:68a, *streams of water* refers specifically to *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. On the clause כאיל תערג (*ke-ayyal ta'arog*), *as a hart craves*, see above, note 382. On this passage, see *Zohar* 2:52b, 219b.

388. **When She is pregnant...** *Shekhinah* cannot deliver the flow of emanation to the lower worlds due to human sin and harsh Judgment. The blessed Holy One then summons the demonic serpent, who bites *Shekhinah*'s vagina, and She gives birth.

This image derives from BT *Bava Batra* 16b, where Rabbah offers a paraphrase of God's words to Job out of the whirlwind, explaining His wondrous precision in nature: "*Do you observe the calving of hinds?* (Job 39:1). This doe has a narrow vagina. When she crouches to give birth, I prepare a serpent who bites her vagina and she is loosened of her offspring. If it comes one second too soon or one second too late, she immediately dies."

On the doe giving birth, see *Midrash Shemu'el* 9:2; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 42:1; Rashi on Job 39:1; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Psalms 741, 862; Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah*, 8c–d; *Zohar* 2:52b, 119b (*RM*), 219b; 3:67b–68a, 67b–68a (*RM*), 249a (*RM*); Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 161–64 (and the literature cited on p. 162, n. 38). Cf. *Zohar* 2:111b.

Psalms 20 contains seventy Hebrew words. On the association of this psalm with pregnancy, see *Midrash*

Tehillim 20:1–2; above at note 341. On the Mountains of Darkness, see above, p. 381, n. 281; cf. above, note 386. On the *hart* as also female, see above, note 382. On "that place" as a euphemism for vagina, see, e.g., BT *Gittin* 69b.

389. **The first time, blood comes out…** Nourishing the demonic serpent, who soon leaves *Shekhinah* alone. The second bite releases a flow of water, nourishing the angels. Then *Shekhinah* gives birth, conveying and sustaining life in the worlds below.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Moses raised his hand and he struck the rock with his staff twice, and abundant water came out, and the community, with its beasts, drank*. According to a midrashic tradition, the first time that Moses struck the rock, blood emerged; and the second time, water emerged. See *Shemot Rabbah* 3:13; *Midrash Tehillim* 78:2; 105:12. Cf. Exodus 7:17. On the connection between Moses' staff and a serpent, see Exodus 4:3; 7:15; *Zohar* 2:64a; *Or Yaqar*. On the portion provided for the demonic force, see above, note 157; p. 436, n. 456.

390. ***And in His palace…*** Apparently alluding to *Shekhinah*, who contains and "houses" *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH* and the blessed Holy One). She is also known as *Glory*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of hinds and strips the forests bare. And in His palace all says "Glory."* On the verse in Ezekiel, see above, p. 28, n. 72.

391. ***In the first month…*** The full verse reads: *In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, a Passover offering to YHVH*. This month is Nisan, in which originally Israel was redeemed from Egypt through the power of *Shekhinah*, who is called here "this animal." See above, note 383.

392. ***On the fourteenth day…*** Rabbi Abba separates the numerical term ארבעה עשר (*arba'ah asar*), *fourteenth*, into two elements: ארבעה (*arba'ah*), "four," and עשר (*eser*), "ten." He

pictures ten angelic “animals” on each side of *Shekhinah* in four directions.

393. **On the first side, it is ten…** Now, apparently, Rabbi Abba offers a different perspective. Only on the right side (corresponding to *Ḥesed*) are there ten angels, whereas on each of the four sides (including the right), there is one angel. So, all together there are fourteen. See *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

394. ***Draw and take yourselves sheep…*** Rabbi El’azar interprets this to mean: *Draw* higher days (namely the sefirotic days of *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) to lower days (the powers of *Shekhinah*). The core of the “higher days” is *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the sun), while *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the moon. By the process of drawing the higher days to the lower days, the divine couple is united.

The solar year consists of approximately 365.25 days (rounded off here to 366). The lunar year (in rabbinic literature) consists of 354.4 days (rounded off here to 355). The concluding sentence alludes to the rabbinic solution to the discrepancy between the solar and lunar years, which consisted of intercalating seven leap months over the course of a nineteen-year cycle. The verse in Exodus reads: *Draw* [or: *Draw out*] *and take yourselves sheep….*

395. **Those ten on the right side…** The ten angelic powers on the right side of *Shekhinah*. See above, note 393.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *Speak to all the community of Israel, saying*, “בעשור (*Be-asor*), *On the tenth, of this month, let every man take a lamb for a father’s house, a lamb for a household*.” Rabbi El’azar wonders why Scripture employs the form עשור (*asor*). He explains that *asor* is modeled on the infinitive absolute form, as in the two versions of the Ten Commandments: זכור (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to hallow it* (Exodus 20:8); and שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep, the Sabbath day to hallow it* (Deuteronomy 5:12). So *asor* now implies a verbal action: “completing the decade.” There are nine potencies in each direction, with

Shekhinah Herself (pictured as “one point”) in the middle, completing the decade. The addition of ten increases the 355 “lower days” to 365 (see the preceding paragraph in the *Zohar*).

On *asor* as an infinitive absolute, see *Zohar* 2:185b. On the infinitive absolute as an imperative (as in the Ten Commandments), see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §113bb. On *Shekhinah* as a point, see above, p. 269, n. 70. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

396. לחדש הזה **(*La-ḥodesh ha-zeh*), *Of this month*...** The ten potencies (or “days”) on the right side unite *Shekhinah* with Her masculine partner (*Tif’eret* or *Yesod*). She is known as both חדש (*ḥodesh*), *month* (or: *new moon*) and זאת (*zot*), “this” (feminine). He is known as זה (*zeh*), “this” (masculine).

On *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* as *zot* and *zeh* respectively, see above, p. 195, n. 26. For the full verse in Exodus, see the preceding note.

397. **On the day when those four...** Apparently referring to the four angels, one on each of the four sides of *Shekhinah*. (See above at note 393.) When those four join with the ten angels on Her right side, *Shekhinah* (“that animal”) gives birth, and the demonic force departs. Then the festival of Passover (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is sanctified.

On *Shekhinah* as “festival,” see *Zohar* 2:194a. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

398. **An inner, upper palace...** The realm of *Binah*, in which *Shekhinah* is sanctified. The gates of *Binah* are opened by the key of *Ḥokhmah*. The southern side corresponds to *Ḥesed*, symbolized by the high priest. This *sefirah* now enters *Binah*.

The high priest’s eight garments include four garments worn by all of the priests (tunic, sash, breeches and headdress—or, for the high priest, a turban, referred to here as “a crown of holiness”), and four special garments worn by the high priest alone (ephod, breastpiece, robe,

and gold medallion). See Exodus 28 and 39; Leviticus 8:7–9, 13; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:501–13; *Zohar* 3:37a, 87a, 132b (*IR*).

The ephod was apparently a multicolored apron worn by Aaron the high priest. Its two shoulder straps bore two precious stones, each engraved with the names of six of the twelve tribes. Fastened to the ephod was a breastpiece made of the same multicolored fabric, to which were affixed twelve other gemstones, each engraved with one of the names of the tribes.

The ציץ (*tsits*), "medallion" (or plate, rosette), was a gold plate worn on the forehead of the high priest over his turban, bearing the inscription קדש ליהוה (*qodesh la-YHVH*), *Holy to YHVH* (Exodus 28:36). On the robe with its bells and pomegranates, see Exodus 28:31–35. The total of "seventy bells with pomegranates" resembles the view recorded in *Vayiqra Rabbah* 21:7 and BT *Zevaḥim* 88b, according to which there were seventy-two bells and pomegranates.

The image of "forty-two letters" recalls the Name of Forty-two Letters, on which see above, pp. 142–43, n. 276. On the gates of *Binah*, see above, note 75. On the key of *Ḥokhmah*, see *Zohar* 1:3b.

399. **another gate to the north…** This direction corresponds to *Gevurah*, symbolized by Levi and the Levites (who sang and played instruments in the Temple). This *sefirah* now enters the realm of *Binah*.

On Levi as Jacob's tithe, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 355; Vol. 4, p. 275, n. 265. On the image of "a ten-stringed harp," see Psalms 33:2; 92:4; 144:9 (and Targum on all three passages, and Rashi on Psalms 92:4); *Tosefta Arakhin* 2:7; BT *Arakhin* 13b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19, 31; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 99a; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:3; 92:7.

400. **The column on the eastern side…** This direction corresponds to *Tif'eret*, who now enters the realm of *Binah*. The "four letters" are the letters of *YHVH*, which can expand or be permuted into the Name of Twelve Letters.

On the Name of Twelve Letters, see Vol. 8, p. 466, n. 20. On the number 270,000, see *Zohar* 3:129b (*IR*). The phrase "from one end of the world to the other" sometimes signifies "from *Binah* to *Shekhinah*," which is spanned by *Tif'eret* (and the *sefirot* surrounding Him).

401. **He is sanctified in them...** *Tif'eret* is sanctified. Then all three aspects (*Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*) emerge from the realm of *Binah*.

402. **Levi is aroused...** *Gevurah* (on the left) is aroused to unite with *Shekhinah*, who is also aroused. She diminishes Herself to the size of single point, preparing to receive the song of the Levites.

In the verse from Exodus, the verb *took* means "took in marriage." Here, the verse implies that the Divine Male approaches *Shekhinah* *from the house of Levi*—that is, extending His left hand toward Her lovingly. *Shekhinah* is *a daughter of Levi*, since She is strongly influenced by *Gevurah*.

The *Zohar* often describes the divine romance by quoting Song of Songs 2:6: *His left hand* [or: *arm*] *beneath my head, his right embracing me*. See, e.g., above, notes 43–44. On the verse from Exodus, see above, pp. 153–54, nn. 4–6. On *Shekhinah* diminishing Herself, see above, note 371; p. 288, n. 119.

403. **the High Priest is aroused...** Once the sefirotic left hand is placed beneath the head of *Shekhinah*, the right hand (symbolized by the high priest) embraces Her. Once She "sits between these two sides," *Tif'eret* (the central column) unites with Her. He is symbolized by Jacob, and She by Rachel. By their passionate union, a spiritual essence (or "soul") is conveyed to *Shekhinah*.

On the kisses between *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, see Vol. 5, pp. 167–68, n. 80. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:45a; 2:97a, 146b, 253b (*Heikh*); *ZḤ* 64b (*ShS*).

404. **Her cohorts...** Her numerous angels. The phrase "Father and Mother" refers to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

On the exclamation “Glory, Glory in the holy palace,” cf. Psalms 29:9 (quoted above at notes 390, 397): *And in His palace all says “Glory.”* The declaration “Sanctified” matches the declaration of the head of the court in Jerusalem, announcing the sanctification of the new moon. See M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 2:7. For various interpretations of the phrase “from the holy palace,” see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

405. **Then the new moon is sanctified fittingly…** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the new moon) is sanctified, and united with *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the sun).

In the verse from Numbers, the phrase ובחדש הראשון (*u-va-ḥodesh ha-rishon*), *in the first month*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, since *ḥodesh* can mean not only “month” but also “new moon,” and because She is now *first*—meaning “prominent,” or implying that She has been sanctified by two of the primordial *sefirot, Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

On the significance of the wording *Draw*, see above, note 394. As explained above (note 396), the wording הזה לחדש (*La-ḥodesh ha-zeh*), *of this month*, alludes to the union of *Shekhinah* with Her divine partner.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, a Passover offering to YHVH*. Exodus 12:21 reads in full: *Draw and take yourselves sheep for your families and slaughter the Passover offering*. For the full text of Exodus 12:3, see above, note 395.

406. **Why is the Passover offering a lamb?…** By sacrificing a lamb, Israel was attacking the false god of the Egyptians, who worshiped this animal.

The context in Exodus (8:21–22) reads: *Pharaoh called to Moses and to Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your god in the land.” Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice the abomination of Egypt to YHVH our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of Egypt before their eyes, will they not stone us?”* In this biblical passage the phrase *the abomination of Egypt* implies that the animal(s) that Israel

would sacrifice was (were) considered taboo by the Egyptians. Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya explains the phrase as a negative euphemism for "false god."

On the Egyptian worship of sheep, see below, note 417; Genesis 46:34; *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 5; *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 8:22; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:17; *Shemot Rabbah* 11:3; 16:2–3; Rashi and Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 8:22; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:46; Naḥmanides on Exodus 12:3; *Zohar* 2:18a (*MhN*), 39b–40b, 41b (*Piq*), 237a. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *When you enter the land that* YHVH *your God is giving you, you shall not learn to do like the abominations of those nations*.

407. **the wisdom of Joseph…** Before presenting his brothers to Pharaoh, Joseph coached them to tell the king that they were shepherds, as recorded in Genesis 46:33–34: *So when Pharaoh calls for you and says, "What is it you do?" you should say, "Your servants have been handlers of livestock from our youth until now, we and our fathers as well," so that you may dwell in the land of Goshen. For every shepherd is an abomination to Egypt*. If the phrase *an abomination to Egypt* means "something despicable," then why would Joseph have told his brothers to present themselves as shepherds, thereby making themselves despicable? Rather, the phrase *an abomination to* (or *of*) *Egypt* refers to the Egyptians' deity, and shepherds were highly esteemed as guardians of the Egyptian god.

On Joseph as ruling over all of Egypt and as a father (or adviser) to Pharaoh, see Genesis 45:8. The context in Genesis 47:2–3 reads: *From among all* [or: *From the pick of*] *his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is it you do?" They said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, we and our fathers as well."*

408. **The best of the land is the land of Rameses…** Also known as *the land of Goshen*. (See Genesis 47:6, 11.) Here, the Egyptians let their flocks graze freely.

409. **Just as the blessed Holy One will punish idolators…** So how could Joseph turn his brothers into objects of Egyptian worship?

For the rabbinic statement paraphrased here, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 96:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 26:7; *Midrash Shemu'el* 24:5; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 3, *Emor* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 5; *Emor 4*.

410. **but rather into rulers over the Egyptians' idols…** By providing them as shepherds for the Egyptian animal-gods.

411. **From the tenth of the month…** The Israelites were commanded to take a lamb on the tenth of Nisan, to keep it for four days, and then to slaughter it. See Exodus 12:3, 6: *Speak to all the community of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month, let every man take a lamb for a father's house, a lamb for a household. … It shall be kept by you until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole congregation of the community of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight."* See *Zohar* 1:256a (*Hash*).

412. **When the Egyptians heard the voice of their deity…** Unable to rescue the sacred lambs, they wept. Seeing these animals being slaughtered was harder on the Egyptians than all of the ten plagues (recounted in Exodus 7–12).

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:17; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 78b; *Zohar* 2:18a (*MhN*). The term "field forum" renders קונפון (*qunpon*), deriving from Greek *kampos*, Latin *campus*, "level space, plain, field; field of battle, place for physical exercises and assembly." The term (spelled variously) appears frequently in rabbinic literature. For a judicial or punitive context, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 3:23; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 31:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:12; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:6; *Zohar* 3:126a.

413. **they punished it with fire…** By roasting the lamb, as indicated by the verse in Exodus: *Do not eat of it*

raw, nor in any way cooked in water, but fire-roasted, its head with its shanks and with its entrails. God did not want the lamb to be eaten *raw*, since then the Egyptians would think that the Israelites craved the animal-deity. On this paragraph, see *Zohar* 2:18a (*MhN*), 237a.

414. **its head bent over its shanks…** See Exodus 12:9 (quoted in the preceding note): *its head with its shanks and with its entrails*.

By eating the paschal lamb on a full stomach, the Israelites showed that they did not crave the animal deity, but, on the contrary, felt contempt toward it. The reference to "disgrace and contempt" conflicts with the implication in rabbinic sources that the reason for eating the lamb after one is already satiated is to demonstrate the holy significance of the sacrifice, which is not being eaten merely out of hunger. See *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 6; *Tosefta Pesaḥim* 5:3 (Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 4:571–72); JT *Pesaḥim* 6:4, 33c; BT *Pesaḥim* 70a; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 12:291. On the theme of disgrace, cf. Naḥmanides on Exodus 12:3.

415. ***No bone shall you break in it…*** Rather, the lamb's bones should be thrown into the street.

See *Zohar* 2:18a (*MhN*), 41b (*Piq*). According to M *Pesaḥim* 7:10, the bones of the paschal lamb should be burnt. See BT *Pesaḥim* 83a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Qorban Pesaḥ* 10:2 (and commentators, ad loc.); *Nitsotsei Zohar*; ibid., *millu'im la-mahadurah ha-sheniyyah*.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt from human to beast, and upon all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment* [literally: *judgments*]—*I,* YHVH. Cf. Numbers 33:4. On the significance of the plural—*judgments*—see *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 7; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 12:12; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 12:12.

416. ***your staff in your hand…*** Demonstrating that the Israelites had no fear of the Egyptian animal-god and

thus needed no lethal weapon.

The full verse reads: *Thus shall you eat it: your hips girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is a passover offering to YHVH*.

417. **the Egyptians worshiped the constellation Aries…** The first sign of the Zodiac.

The word Aries means "ram." The corresponding Hebrew term טלה (*taleh*) means "lamb." The concluding word in this sentence, "sheep," renders אימרא (*imra*), which means specifically "lamb," understood here as "sheep."

On the Egyptian worship of Aries, see Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 8:22; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:46; Naḥmanides on Exodus 12:3. Cf. above, note 406.

418. **If so, they should have worshiped a lamb…** As mentioned in the preceding note, the Hebrew term for Aries—טלה (*taleh*)—means "lamb." So why did the Egyptians worship the adult of this species?

419. **They worship them all…** All forms of this animal, each of which represents a manifestation of Aries.

420. **all cattle were their deity…** So in the last of the ten plagues, God also killed *all the firstborn of the cattle*. These firstborn animals represent demonic rungs.

On *all the firstborn of the cattle* as alluding to Egyptian animal worship, see *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 13; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 12:29; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 7:9; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 17, 88b; *Tanḥuma, Bo* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bo* 18; Rashi on Exodus 11:5. On the demonic firstborn animals, see *Zohar* 2:37b.

421. ***Nothing* מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *that is leavened, shall you eat…*** According to Rabbi El'azar, the two similar terms for "leaven" allude to two demonic aspects: the grammatically masculine term חמץ (*ḥamets*), "leavened stuff," refers to the demonic male potency (Samael), while the grammatically feminine term מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), "what is leavened," refers to his female partner (Lilith).

On leaven as representing evil, see the prayer attributed to Rabbi Tanḥum in JT *Berakhot* 4:2, 7d: "May it be Your will, *YHVH* my God and God of my fathers, that You break and destroy the yoke of the evil impulse from our heart. For You created us to do Your will, and we must do Your will; You desire it and we desire it. So who prevents it? The leaven in the dough."

See BT *Berakhot* 17a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *se'or she-ba-issah*; *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noaḥ* 4; *Zohar* 1:142a–b, 226b; 2:40a, 40b–41a (*Piq*), 182a, 183a–b; 3:12b, 95a–b, 97a; above, p. 375 at n. 265; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 132 (and Wolfson's note); Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:189. Cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 23:17. On different names for leaven, see *Zohar* 2:40a, 182a.

422. **of the former is written *Nothing... shall you eat...*** Rabbi Shim'on asks why the commands concerning מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), "what is leavened," and חמץ (*ḥamets*), "leavened stuff," are worded differently. The former is prohibited by a warning expressed in the second person: *Nothing* מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *that is leavened, shall you eat*, whereas the latter is prohibited more indirectly, almost as a request: חמץ (*Ḥamets*), *Leavened stuff, shall not be eaten*. Why doesn't Scripture employ a direct command in the second person also concerning *ḥamets*?

He explains that since *maḥmetset* symbolizes Lilith, who seduces men to sin, Scripture prohibits her type of leaven with a direct warning. On the other hand, *ḥamets* symbolizes Samael, who is tenuously attached to the divine realm, so his type of leaven is prohibited more politely.

423. ***You shall not eat ḥamets, leavened stuff...*** Here, there is a direct command in the second person concerning *ḥamets*. (The phrase *with it* refers to the Passover offering.)

424. **Out of honor, Scripture adds extra words...** Because of the great importance of the Passover offering, Scripture also employs a direct warning in the second person concerning *ḥamets*. But this comes only "afterward"

(i.e., in Deuteronomy); initially (in Exodus) Scripture presents a "request."

425. **The harsher of the two of them: מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *what is leavened*...** Now, Rabbi Shim'on looks at this word more closely. It actually includes both the male and female demonic forces. The middle three letters of the word can spell חמץ (*ḥamets*), *leavened stuff*, signifying the male. The initial and final letters can spell מת (*met*), "dead," alluding to Lilith, who represents מות (*mavet*), "death."

The full verse in Proverbs (warning against the seductive *strange woman*) reads: *Her feet descend to Death; her steps grasp Sheol*. In the *Zohar*, this verse is sometimes applied to Lilith and her demonic realm, and sometimes to *Shekhinah*. See above, p. 191, n. 14.

The verse in Exodus 12 reads: *For whoever eats* מחמצת (*maḥmetset*), *what is leavened, that person* [or: *soul*] *will be cut off from the community of Israel*. On being *cut off* as referring to both this world and the world that is coming, cf. *Sifrei*, Numbers 112; BT *Sanhedrin* 64b, 90b, 99a.

426. **מצה (*Matsah*)—why?...** Whereas the various words for "leaven" signify demonic powers, the word מצה (*matsah*) alludes to *Shekhinah*. Why is She (or He) called *matsah*? (In this paragraph, *Shekhinah* appears as masculine.)

First, Rabbi Shim'on paraphrases a rabbinic interpretation of the divine name שדי (*Shaddai*), whose etymology and meaning are unclear. According to BT *Ḥagigah* 12a (in the name of Resh Lakish), it alludes to God's original command to limit the expansion of the universe: "I am the one ש (*she*-), who, said to the world: 'די (*dai*), Enough!'" In the *Zohar, Shaddai* usually designates *Yesod*, but here it refers to *Shekhinah* (who sometimes shares His qualities).

Rabbi Shim'on proceeds to offer an alternative interpretation of *Shaddai*, based on the root שדד (*shdd*), "to perpetrate violence, destroy." *Shekhinah* "destroys" evil powers. Similarly, She is called מצה (*matsah*) because this

word can also mean “strife, quarrel” (as in Isaiah 58:4; Proverbs 13:10; 17:19), and *Shekhinah* quarrels with those evil powers.

The verse in Exodus reads in full: *He called the name of the place* מסה ומריבה (*Massah u-Mrivah*), *Massah and Meribah* [meaning: *Testing and Quarreling*], *for the quarrel of the Children of Israel, and for their testing YHVH, saying, “Is YHVH among us or not?”* Rabbi Shim’on quotes the phrase ומריבה מסה (*Massah u-Mrivah*) either because of the similarity in both sound and meaning between מסה (*massah*), *testing*, and מצה (*matsah*), “quarrel,” or based on *Targum Onqelos* on the verse in Exodus, which renders מסה ומריבה (*Massah u-Mrivah*), *Testing and Quarreling*, as נסיתא ומצותא (*nisseita u-matsuta*).

On the midrashic interpretation of *Shaddai*, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:8; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 11; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3.

427. ***Rebuke the beast of the reed…*** The full verse (apparently referring to the humbling of proud Egypt) reads: *Rebuke the beast of the reed* [or: *marsh*], *the herd of bulls among calves of the peoples—cringing with pieces of silver. He scattered peoples that delighted in battle*.

In rabbinic literature Esau often represents Rome, and in medieval literature he often represents Christendom or Christian rule.

428. **on the day that King Solomon…** In other words, Solomon’s unfaithfulness laid the foundations of the Roman empire, which eventually destroyed the Second Temple and exiled the people of Israel.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 21b, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: “When Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Gabriel descended and thrust a reed into the sea, and it gathered a sandbank around it, on which was built the metropolis of Rome.”

According to Rabbi Shim’on, *the reed* represents Samael, who is tenuously attached to the divine realm (see above, note 422), whereas *the beast* represents Lilith. The

subject “she” in the clause “she rules the world” may refer to Rome (or Christendom), represented by Lilith. Apparently, Lilith is also represented by the *rush* mentioned in the verse from Isaiah.

On the passage in *Sanhedrin*, see JT *Avodah Zarah* 1:3, 39c; BT *Shabbat* 56b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:6. The verse in Isaiah is part of an oracle delivered against Egypt.

429. **In Egypt she reigned…** Lilith reigned there, generating various demonic forces, all connected with חמץ (*ḥamets*), *leavened stuff*. (Here, Rabbi Shim’on is not distinguishing between חמץ [*ḥamets*], *leavened stuff*, and מחמצת [*maḥmetset*], *what is leavened*.)

By removing “the thinnest thread of all” from the letter ח (*ḥet*)—namely the upper bit of its left leg joined to the top horizontal line—God turned the ח (*ḥet*) into ה (*he*), and the letters of חמץ (*ḥamets*) were rearranged to form מצה (*matsah*), symbolizing *Shekhinah*. Thereby, “He broke the ח (*ḥet*) of this חיה (*ḥayyah*), *beast*,” namely Lilith, who is identified as חמץ (*ḥamets*).

430. **the blessed Holy One will break that קנה (*qaneh*), *reed*…** Similarly, God will break the “foot” of the letter ק (*qof*)—namely the vertical line extending down on its left side—turning this letter into ה (*he*), so that the word קנה (*qaneh*), *reed*, is transformed into הנה (*hinneh*), *behold*. This latter word appears in both verses from Isaiah describing the future salvation of Israel.

On the contrast between ק (*qof*), symbolizing Lilith, and ה (*he*), symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:148b (Vol. 5, p. 364, n. 492). The verse in Isaiah 40 reads: *Behold, My Lord YHVH comes in might, and His arm wins triumph for Him; behold, His reward is with Him*, ופעלתו (*u-ph’ullato*), *and His recompense* [literally: *and His action*] *before Him*. In this verse, *His reward* and *His recompense* refer to what God has acquired and now offers to the cities of Judah.

431. ***On the day of First Fruits…*** The full verse, pertaining to the Festival of *Shavu’ot* (Weeks), reads: *On the*

day of First Fruits, when you bring an offering of new grain to YHVH in your Festival of Weeks [literally: *in your Weeks*], *a holy convocation shall you have, no task of work shall you do*.

432. **who is *the day?...*** This sefirotic day is apparently *Binah*, pictured as "the river issuing from Eden," namely from *Ḥokhmah*. Both of these primordial *sefirot* (*Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*) are described as *First Fruits*. *Tif'eret*, symbolized by (Written) Torah depends on, or issues from, *Binah*. Here, *Binah* is also described as the Tree of Life.

Alternatively, the sefirotic day is *Ze'eir Anpin*, pictured as "the river issuing from Eden," namely from *Ḥokhmah*. *Ze'eir Anpin* derives from "those supernal *First Fruits*," namely from the primordial *sefirot Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. *Tif'eret*, symbolized by (Written) Torah, is the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*, and both of them represent the Tree of Life.

Fittingly, on the Festival of *Shavu'ot*, the fruit of (certain) trees was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. Actually, on *Shavu'ot* the "first fruits" brought to the Temple included only those from the seven kinds of produce for which the land of Israel was praised: wheat, barley, figs, vines, pomegranates, olives, and honey (see Deuteronomy 8:8). See Meir ben Todros ha-Levi Abulafia on *Sanhedrin* 11b, s.v. *al sheloshah simanin*; *Or Yaqar*. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

433. ***Lift up your heads, O gates!...*** Alluding to the fifty gates of *Binah*. On this image, see above, note 231.

434. **I have found in the Book of Enoch...** According to this venerable text, the *gates* mentioned in Psalm 24 are not the fifty gates of *Binah* but rather "the last three" sefirotic gates of *Ze'eir Anpin*, namely *Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*. These are situated "below the Patriarchs," namely below *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized respectively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These three higher *sefirot* are "the heads of those gates"; whereas the lower three *sefirot*

are described as angelic *ofanim* (wheels), carrying these "heads."

The verse in Psalms reads: שאו (*Se'u*), *Lift up* [or: *Carry*], *O gates, your heads!* [or: *your heads, O gates!*]. On the Book of Enoch, see above, note 254.

435. **the Matriarchs, who are four below** Alluding to four potencies within *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the four matriarchs: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah.

436. ***That the King of glory may enter…*** Referring to *Ze'eir Anpin*, who is *the King of glory*, namely of *Shekhinah* (known as *glory* and symbolized by the moon). *Ze'eir Anpin* is also known as *YHVH Tseva'ot*. The (Written) Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret* (the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*), while the Ark symbolizes *Shekhinah*. *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) is pictured as "supernal Torah," while She is "Oral Torah."

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The name *YHVH Tseva'ot* appears several verses later (in Psalms 24:10): *Who is He, the King of glory? YHVH Tseva'ot, He is the King of glory. Selah*. The name *YHVH Tseva'ot* means *YHVH of armies* (or *hosts*).

437. **בשבועותיכם (*Be-shavu'oteikhem*), *In your* [*Festival of*] *Weeks…*** Rabbi Shim'on construes the verse hyperliterally: *On the day of First Fruits, when you bring an offering of new grain to YHVH* בשבועותיכם (*be-shavu'oteikhem*), *in your weeks*…. The word *be-shavu'oteikhem, in your weeks*, now refers to Israel's reckoning of the seven weeks between *Pesaḥ* and *Shavu'ot*.

Whenever Israel determines (and sanctifies) the new moon (and thereby determines the beginning of that month's festivals), God instructs the angels to sanctify themselves and prepare to observe the new moon and festivals along with Israel.

The word "pulpit" renders תיבה (*teivah*), "pulpit, elevated reading desk, platform." See above, pp. 79–80, n. 74.

438. **a flow of seven rungs below…** The seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*, all conveyed to the rung of *Shekhinah*

Herself. (Alternatively, the seven *sefirot* from *Binah* to *Yesod*, all conveyed to *Shekhinah*.) It would seem that there are only six *sefirot* (*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) flowing into *Shekhinah*. However, the number seven includes another one as well, based on an interpretation of the passage in Deuteronomy (22:6–7), which reads: *If a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way, in any tree or on the ground—fledglings or eggs—and the mother crouching over the fledglings or over the eggs, you shall not take the mother together with the children. Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself, so that it may go well with you and you will prolong your days*.

The mother in this biblical passage symbolizes *Binah*, who is *crouching over the fledglings*—namely the lower *sefirot*. The people of Israel are commanded to *surely send off the mother*—that is, not to try and fathom that transcendent realm. Rather, they should focus on the lower *sefirot*—*the children you may take for yourself*. The rung of *Shekhinah* is included along with "those six children," namely the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*.

On the passage in Deuteronomy, see Vol. 4, p. 530, n. 598; Vol. 7, p. 98, n. 297. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

439. **Rav Hamnuna Sava...** According to him, since *Shavu'ot* commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, on this day Israel should draw emanation from "only five children" of *Binah* (namely the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Hod*), symbolized by "the five books of Torah."

For a somewhat different interpretation of the "five children," see *Or Yaqar*. On the figure of Rav Hamnuna Sava, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

440. **There are six!...** Including *Yesod*. But there are actually seven, including *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as a bird nestled between the wings of Mother *Binah*.

441. **They draw out that bird…** By whispering their prayers, the people of Israel coax *Shekhinah* to fly to them from Her Mother *Binah*.

442. **When all those Sons…** When the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* hear the chirping of *Shekhinah*, they come to join Her.

443. **They send off the Mother…** The people of Israel realize that they cannot fathom the supernal realm of Mother *Binah*, so they send Her off and focus on Her children, the lower *sefirot*.

The seventh heaven (counting from below) represents *Ḥesed*, which borders on *Binah*. From there and above, one should not dare to venture. See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b–13a: "Rabbi Yehudah said, 'There are two heavens….' Resh Lakish said, 'Seven…' … Rabbi Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'There is one more heaven above the heads of the living beings, as is written: *An image above the heads of the living being: a heaven like awesome ice* (*Ezekiel* 1:22).' Until here, you have permission to speak; from here on, you do not have permission. For so it is written in the Book of Ben Sira: 'What is hidden from you [or: what is too wondrous for you], do not search; what is concealed from you, do not explore. What is permitted to you, contemplate; you have no business with secret things."

On the quotation from Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) 3:21–22, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77; *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:2; *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:24); *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit* 22 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:32). On the passage in Deuteronomy, see above, note 438.

444. מקרא קדש **(*Miqra qodesh*), *A calling of holiness…*** The full verse reads: *On the day of First Fruits, when you bring an offering of new grain to YHVH in your Festival of Weeks,* מקרא קדש (*miqra qodesh*), *a holy convocation, shall you have, no task of work shall you do*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *miqra qodesh* hyperliterally as *a calling of holiness*, referring to Israel's calling to Holy *Shekhinah* by prayer. Once the other sefirotic days (from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) grasp *Shekhinah*,

they are all called מקראי קדש (*miqra'ei qodesh*), understood here as *called by holiness*, namely by *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Exodus reads: *Observe the Sabbath, for it* [or: *she*] *is* קדש (*qodesh*), *holy* [literally: *holiness*] *to you*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on quotes the conclusion of the verse to demonstrate that *Shekhinah* (*she*) is קדש (*qodesh*), *holiness*.

The verse in Leviticus reads: *These are the appointed times of YHVH*, מקראי קדש (*miqra'ei qodesh*), *holy convocations, which you shall proclaim* [literally: *call*] *at their appointed times*. Here, *miqra'ei qodesh* is construed hyperliterally as *callings of holiness* and *called by holiness*. See *Zohar* 3:93b–94a.

445. **so they come to them...** That is, so the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* come to the people of Israel, who grasp them. For the verse in Leviticus, see the preceding note.

446. ***You shall present an ascent offering...*** Earlier in the same biblical chapter, the ascent offering for *Pesaḥ* is described as אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering*, whereas in verse 27 the ascent offering for *Shavu'ot* is not called *isheh*.

Numbers 28:19 reads in full: *You shall present a fire offering, an ascent offering to YHVH: two bulls from the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, unblemished they shall be for you*. Numbers 28:27 reads in full: *You shall present an ascent offering as a pleasing aroma to YHVH: two bulls from the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs*.

447. **the day when the Bride enters the canopy...** *Shavu'ot* commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, which is pictured midrashically as the marriage of God and His bride, Israel. According to Kabbalah, *Shekhinah* Herself is called Assembly of Israel, and *Shavu'ot* commemorates Her union with the blessed Holy One. So, on this day "the Bride enters the canopy," escaping the demonic powers that threaten Her.

According to rabbinic law, following the cessation of menstrual flow, a married woman must wait seven days before immersing in the *miqveh* (ritual bath) and then

resuming marital relations with her husband. Just as the menstruant counts those seven days, so Israel counts seven weeks from *Pesaḥ* to *Shavu'ot*—namely the forty-nine days of the Omer—purifying themselves in preparation for their wedding to God on *Shavu'ot*. *Shekhinah* Herself observes these "days of purification fittingly."

The statement "The King tastes the flavor of a virgin" derives from a Talmudic interpretation of a verse in the book of Esther, describing the sexual relations between King Ahasuerus and Esther. See BT *Megillah* 13a: "*The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she won his grace and favor more than all the other virgins* (Esther 2:17). Rav said, 'If he wished to taste the flavor of a virgin [when coupling with Esther], he tasted it; the flavor of a married woman, he tasted it.'" See *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Esther 1053.

Here, Rabbi Shim'on implies that *Shekhinah* was like a virgin for King *Tif'eret*, not having been "violated" by the demonic Other Side. This explains why the term אשה (*isheh*), *fire offering*, does not appear in the verse describing the ascent offering brought on *Shavu'ot*—because אִשֶּׁה (*isheh*), *fire offering*, is construed as אִשָּׁה (*ishah*), "wife," and *Shekhinah* was still like an unmarried virgin. She is symbolized by "the sanctuary," undefiled by "another one," namely the Other Side.

The term אשה (*isheh*), *fire offering*, also alludes to אישים (*ishim*), "personages," a term that (according to Maimonides) refers to the tenth and lowest class of angels. In the *Zohar*, the *ishim* sometimes appear as demonic (or semi-demonic) forces that consume what is burnt in the אשים (*ishim*), "[altar-]fires." Since the Other Side is excluded from the wedding celebration of *Shavu'ot*, "there are no אישים (*ishim*) here"—that is, "there are no demonic personages here," which is another reason why the term אשה (*isheh*), *fire offering*, does not appear in the verse.

On God's marriage to Israel at Mount Sinai, see, e.g., *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 19:17; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 22:4; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:6; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:12. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. On *Shavu'ot* as the day on which the Bride enters the canopy, see *Zohar* 1:8a; cf. 2:183a; 3:98a–b.

On the parallel between the menstruant's counting and the Counting of the Omer, see *Zohar* 3:97a–b, 97a–b (*Piq*). On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see above, p. 389, n. 307. On the *ishim*, see below, note 449; above, notes 160, 248–49.

448. **We still need to open this entrance** Or, "We still need this entrance to open." Rabbi Abba seeks further clarification on the *ishim*.

449. **I raise my hands in prayer…** Rabbi Shim'on seeks divine assistance as he delves more deeply into the nature of the *ishim*.

The אישים (*ishim*), angelic "personages," are linked with both good and evil, and thus with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Rabbi Shim'on associates the term *ishim* with its homonym: אשים, or אישים, (*ishim*), "[altar-]fires," and the singular form אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering*. The perpetual daily offering and certain offerings of the major festivals (except for *Shavu'ot*) are described as *isheh* (*a fire offering*), alluding to the fact that the *ishim* (angelic "personages") partake of those offerings. However, *Shavu'ot* commemorates the giving of the Torah, symbolized by the Tree of Life—not the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—so on this day the angelic *ishim* have no share in the festival offering, "and they should not be there." Therefore, the term *isheh* (*a fire offering*) does not appear in the verse describing that offering. See above, note 447.

In the Mishnah (*Zevaḥim* 5:4; 10:2), the phrase לאשים כליל (*kalil la-ishim*) refers to a sacrifice that is "given entirely to the fires" (or "burnt entirely in the [altar-]fires.)" Here, this

phrase also implies “given entirely to the *ishim* (the angelic ‘personages’).” See above, note 248.

The statement “*An ascent offering* must be brought under its own name” implies here that it should not be brought as *a fire offering*. For the statement’s original meaning and context, see *Sifra, Vayiqra, dibbura di-ndavah* 6:9, 7c; BT *Zevaḥim* 46b.

On the image here of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1279, n. 440. For the full text of Numbers 28:27, see above, note 446.

450. ***In the seventh month…*** The full verse reads: *In the seventh month, on the first of the month, you shall have a holy convocation, no task of work shall you do. A day of trumpeting it shall be for you*. This *seventh month* was later known as Tishrei, and its beginning was (and is) celebrated as Rosh Hashanah.

The two days of Rosh Hashanah correspond respectively to *Din* (Judgment), which is strict, and *Shekhinah*, which represents lenient Judgment. See above at note 198.

451. ועשיתם **(*Va-asitem*), *And you shall make, an ascent offering…*** Rabbi Shim’on wonders why Scripture employs this verb regarding the sacrifice for Rosh Hashanah rather than the verb והקרבתם (*ve-hiqravtem*), *and you shall present*, which appears “on all the other days,” namely the other festivals mentioned in this chapter: Yom Kippur, *Sukkot*, and *Shemini Atseret* (see Numbers 29:8, 13, 36).

He explains that the verb *va-asitem, and you shall make*, alludes to Isaac’s request to Esau, as recorded in Genesis 27:3–4: *So now, please take up your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt me some game,* ועשה (*va-aseh*), *and make, me a delicious dish of the kind that I love and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die*. Isaac represents *Din* (the quality of harsh Judgment), which on Rosh Hashanah authorizes Samael the Accuser (represented by Esau) to gather the sins of the world, “making,” as it were, *a delicious dish* for

Din. In order to overcome the Accuser, Israel needs to engage in *teshuvah*, thereby "making" their own "delicious cooked dishes."

The term *isheh* (*a fire offering*) does not appear in this verse because the *ishim* (angelic "personages") have no share in this offering. The same applies to "all the other sacrifices"—actually, just to the special sacrifices for Sabbath, Yom Kippur, and *Shavu'ot*, as described in Numbers 28–29. See above, notes 447, 449.

On the significance of the wording *va-asitem*, see JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 4:7, 59c; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 29:12; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:12; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 169a. On the allegorical interpretation of the passage in Genesis, see *Zohar* 3:99b–100b (*Piq*). Numbers 29:2 reads in full: ועשיתם (*Va-asitem*), *And you shall perform* [literally: *And you shall make*], *an ascent offering as a pleasing aroma to YHVH: one bull from the herd, one ram, seven unblemished yearling lambs*.

452. **While he is proceeding…** While Samael (represented by Esau the hunter) is gathering sins on Rosh Hashanah to bring to *Din* (represented by Isaac), the people of Israel (represented by Jacob) take advice from *Shekhinah* (represented by Rebekah) and engage in rituals and prayers.

The wine brought by Jacob to his father, Isaac, symbolizes the flow of emanation from the far reaches of the highest *sefirot*, which delights and assuages *Din*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *He* [namely Isaac] *said, "Serve me, that I may eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you* [or: *so that I may give you my innermost blessing*]." *He* [namely Jacob] *served him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank*. On this verse, see above, pp. 275–76, n. 87. On wine as the flow of emanation, see above, note 180.

453. ***his brother Esau came in…*** Samael came before *Din* (symbolized by Isaac), bearing bundles of sins that he had gathered. See *Zohar* 3:100a (*Piq*).

454. **day of blasting…** A day that features the sounding of a shofar. The *ram* included in the sacrifice for Rosh Hashanah alludes to the ram substituted at the last moment for Isaac when he was about to be sacrificed by Abraham (see Genesis 22:13). According to a rabbinic tradition, Isaac was bound on the altar on Rosh Hashanah.

The *goat* included in the sacrifice for Rosh Hashanah recalls the scapegoat sent to Azazel (representing Samael) on Yom Kippur. (See Leviticus 16.) According to a rabbinic tradition, the scapegoat serves as a bribe for Samael, assuaging him and deterring him from accusing Israel.

Rabbi Shim'on combines this motif with the theme of Esau's weeping. According to the biblical account, after Esau realized that Jacob had tricked their father, Isaac, into giving Jacob the blessing of the firstborn, *Esau raised his voice and wept* (Genesis 27:38). Here, Esau's weeping represents Samael's bitter frustration when he finds that Israel's *teshuvah* has overcome his diabolical accusations, and then realizes that he gathered sins and "hunted game for nothing." The *goat* offered to Samael on Rosh Hashanah is intended to assuage his sorrow.

The phrase *Parashat Emor el ha-Kohanim* means "the Portion *Say to the priests*," which includes Leviticus 21:1–24:23. The *Zohar*'s commentary on this portion includes a discussion of the scapegoat. See *Zohar* 3:101b–102a.

On the motif of the scapegoat as a bribe to Satan (or Samael), see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46: "They gave him a bribe on Yom Kippur so that he would not nullify Israel's sacrifice." On this theme (and on assuaging demonic powers, in general), see above, p. 436, n. 456.

On the tradition that Isaac was bound on Rosh Hashanah, see Vol. 7, pp. 112–13, n. 343. On the theme of Esau's weeping, see Vol. 4, p. 60, n. 264. For the full text of Numbers 29:2, see above, note 451. Numbers 29:5 reads in full: *And one goat for a purification offering* [or: *a sin offering*] *to atone for you*.

455. **On *the fifteenth day of the seventh month…*** The full verse (describing the festival of *Sukkot*) reads: *On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, no task of work shall you do, and you shall celebrate a festival to YHVH seven days*.

456. ***The ark came to rest in the seventh month…*** Based on this reference to *the seventh month*, Rabbi Abba interprets the whole verse (from the story of Noah and the Flood) as relating to the festival of *Sukkot*, which begins *on the fifteenth day of the seventh month* (as indicated in the verse from Numbers, quoted in the preceding paragraph).

During the whole first half of Tishrei (*the seventh month*), Mother *Shekhinah* hovers over Her children (the people of Israel), so that the demonic Other One will not succeed in his accusations against them during this time of Judgment (beginning on Rosh Hashanah). Soon after Yom Kippur has passed, and the demonic forces have abated, Israel celebrates *Sukkot*, dwelling safely in their *sukkot* (booths). On the first two days of the festival, *Shekhinah* commands Israel to offer sacrifices for the heavenly princes of the seventy nations of the world, to nourish them, assuage them, and deter them from threatening Israel, though She Herself keeps Her distance from those princes. From the third day of *Sukkot* (*the seventeenth day of the month*), *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Noah's *ark*) begins to settle over the princes, who are pictured as *the mountains of* אררט (*Ararat*), *Ararat*. Rabbi Abba plays on *Ararat* and the root ארר (*'rr*), "to curse."

The book of Numbers states that on each of the seven days of *Sukkot*, a specified number of bulls is to be sacrificed on the altar; the sum total is seventy. According to rabbinic tradition, these offerings benefited the seventy nations of the world. On the seventy bulls, see Numbers 29:12–34. On these bulls and the seventy nations, see above, note 49. On the heavenly princes of the nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. On the negative valence of *Ararat*, see *Zohar* 3:149b.

457. **On the first day of the Festival…** *Shekhinah* does not settle over the heavenly princes of the nations until the third day.

According to the passage in Numbers 29:12–34, on each subsequent day of *Sukkot* the number of bulls offered decreases (thirteen, twelve,… seven). Thus, as the days of the Festival increase, the number of bulls offered each day decreases. For the third day, Scripture specifies עשתי עשר (*ashtei asar*), *eleven*. Rabbi El'azar implies that the letter ע (*ayin*), which begins that number, turns the hypothetical form שתי עשר (*shetei asar*), "twelve," into *ashtei asar, eleven*. Ironically, an added letter decreases the number of bulls for the sacrifice. This diminishment befits the alien princes, whose demonic nature is characterized by lack and deficiency as well as stinginess. They deserve to receive less and less.

On the gradual diminishment of the Festival offerings, see BT *Sukkah* 47a; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pineḥas* 16; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 29:36; Rashi on Numbers 29:18; *Zohar* 2:135a, 233b; 3:24b, 92a.

On the significance of the spelling עשתי עשר (*ashtei asar*), *eleven*, cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 29a, where Rav Ashi cites עשרה עשתי (*ashtei esreh*), *eleven* (Exodus 26:7) as an example of the maxim "Whoever increases, decreases." See Ibn Ezra on Numbers 7:72; Parḥon, *Maḥberet he-Arukh*, s.v. *'sht*; *Zohar* 2:214b, 233b.

On the image of "spoil," see below, note 468. Numbers 29:20 reads in full: *On the third day*, פרים עשתי עשר (*parim ashtei asar*), *eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen unblemished yearling lambs*.

458. **From the second day, waters began to appear…** Rabbi Shim'on alludes to the water libation, which was performed during *Sukkot* on the altar in the Temple to call forth rain during the upcoming winter. This libation was enacted on each day of the Festival, but Rabbi Shim'on's statement—"From the second day, waters began

to appear”—refers to a playful rabbinic interpretation that seeks to find scriptural support for the water libation.

This interpretation (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Bateira) begins by examining a fine point in the description of the offering to be brought *on the second day* (Numbers 29:17). Toward the end of that description, verse 19 reads: *One goat as a purification offering* [or: *as a sin offering*] *besides the perpetual ascent offering and its grain offering* ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations*. (The simple sense of *libations* here is “libations of wine.”) This same verse appears for all the other days of *Sukkot*, but instead of the plural ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations*, the wording for the first, third, fourth, fifth, and seventh days is ונסכה (*ve-niskah, and its libation* (Numbers 29:16, 22, 25, 28, 34). For the sixth day, the wording is the plural ונסכיה (*u-nsakheha*), *and its libations* (ibid., 31).

A further small textual difference appears in the descriptions of the grain offerings accompanying the animal sacrifices on *Sukkot*. The grain offering for the first day is described fully in Numbers 29:14–15. For days two through six of Festival, Scripture suffices with the following wording: *Their grain offering and their libations, for the bulls and for the rams and for the lambs, by their number*, כמשפט (*ka-mishpat*), *according to the rule* (Numbers 29:18, 21, 24, 27, 30)—i.e., according to the full description in verses 14–15. However, for the seventh day of *Sukkot*, instead of כמשפט (*ka-mishpat*), *according to the rule*, Scripture reads כמשפטם (*ke-mishpatam*), *according to their rules* (Numbers 29:33).

Focusing on these three tiny differences, Rabbi Yehudah son of Bateira combines the letter מ (*mem*) in the word ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations*; the letter י (*yod*) in the word ונסכיה (*u-nsakheha*), *and its libations*; and the second letter מ (*mem*) in the word כמשפטם (*ke-mishpatam*), *according to their rules*. These three letters spell the word

מים (*mayim*), “water(s),” which “demonstrates” that the water libation for *Sukkot* is indicated already in the Torah!

Here, Rabbi Shim’on’s statement implies that “from the second day [i.e., from the מ (*mem*) in the word ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations*, relating to the offering of the second day, the midrashic hint about] מים (*mayim*), waters, began to appear.” Subsequently, beginning on the third day of *Sukkot, Shekhinah* settled over the princes of the nations.

On the water libation, see above, note 48. On its being performed on all the days of *Sukkot*, see M *Sukkah* 4:1; *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:16.

On Rabbi Yehudah son of Bateira’s playful interpretation, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 150; JT *Shevi’it* 1:6, 33b; *Sukkah* 4:1, 54b; *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57b; BT *Shabbat* 103b, *Ta’anit* 2b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:8; *Pesiqta Rabbati*, add., 202b; Rashi on Numbers 29:18; *Zohar* 3:54b (*Tos*); *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 29:33. (All three JT passages attribute the interpretation to Rabbi Akiva.) Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 29:31; JT *Sukkah* 4:9, 54d; BT *Zevaḥim* 110b. On the wordings ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations* (Numbers 29:19), and ונסכיה (*u-nsakheha*), *and its libations* (ibid., 31), see Milgrom, *Numbers*, 327, nn. 9–10.

459. **The Babylonians did not know…** The interpretation referred to above by Rabbi Shim’on (concerning the scriptural basis of the water libation on *Sukkot*) appears in various rabbinic sources, including the Babylonian Talmud (see the end of the preceding note). Now he indicates that the Babylonians did not understand why the allusion to the water libation begins “here,” namely with the verse relating to the offering of the second day of *Sukkot* and the word ונסכיהם (*ve-niskeihem*), *and their libations* (Numbers 29:19). After all, the Festival offerings begin to decrease on the second day (see above, note 457), and “Israel’s benefit does not belong in a place of decrease.” However, since the sacrifices (and their accompanying

libations) are intended (at least partially) for the princes of the nations, their diminishment is fitting. These princes are represented by *the mountains of Ararat* (Genesis 8:4)—mountains of curses—and the gradual diminishment of the offerings (and libations) on *Sukkot* is foretold by the diminishment of the waters of the Flood, as described in Genesis 8:5.

Since the water libations "belong to" the princes, the three letters מ (*mem*), י (*yod*), מ (*mem*) "do not combine," that is, they do not appear in the Torah combined into the word מים (*mayim*), but rather scattered among various words in different verses (as explained in the preceding note). The separation of these three letters reduces the benefits to the alien princes.

On the *Zohar*'s attitude toward "the Babylonians," see above, note 199. For the full verses in Genesis, see above at notes 456–57.

460. **Consequently, their benefit...** The benefit that the alien princes derive from the water libation keeps diminishing.

461. ***Until the tenth month*—Tevet...** This month is a time of evil, since according to 2 Kings 25:1, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began *on the tenth day of the tenth month*, a date that is commemorated by fasting and prayers of penitence and supplication. The arousal of demonic power interrupts the union of the Bride (*Shekhinah*) and *Tif'eret*.

On the month of Tevet, see *Zohar* 2:12a; *ZḤ* 36d (*RR*), 92d (*MhN, Eikhah*). On the demonic nature of the mountains, see above, notes 456, 459. On the Mountains of Darkness, see above, p. 381, n. 281. For the full verse in Genesis, see above at note 457.

462. **אשה (*Isheh*), *A fire offering*...** The full verse reads: *You shall present an ascent offering,* אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering, a pleasing aroma to YHVH: thirteen bulls from the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, unblemished they*

shall be. According to Rabbi Shim'on, the fact that the *ascent offering* is described as אשה (*isheh*), *a fire offering*, indicates that the אישים (*ishim*), angelic "personages," devour their share of the sacrifice, presumably conveying some of this to the alien princes. On the *ishim*, see above, notes 160, 248–49, 447, 449.

463. **There are seventy bulls…** The total of seventy bulls offered as sacrifices during *Sukkot* correspond to (and are intended for) the seventy heavenly princes ruling over the seventy nations of the world. The daily number of these bulls is highest on the first day (thirteen) and then decreases by one on each subsequent day. Due to their harsh nature, they are described as "goring bulls."

On the seventy bulls, see above, notes 49, 456–57. On "goring bulls," see above, pp. 68–70, nn. 45, 48.

464. **אילם (*Eilim*), *Rams*—spelled deficiently…** The full spelling would include a second י (*yod*): אילים (*eilim*). The deficient spelling alludes to the fact that these rams are intended for the alien princes, who are characterized by lack. Two rams are offered on each of the seven days of *Sukkot*, so "there are fourteen," which is the numeric value of the word יד (*yad*), "hand," alluding to יד יהוה (*yad YHVH*), *the hand of YHVH*, which controls all of the princes.

For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 462. The full verse in Exodus (describing the fifth plague) reads: *Look, the hand of YHVH is about to be against your livestock in the field, against the horses, against the donkeys, against the camels, against the cattle, and against the sheep—a very severe pestilence*.

465. ***Yearling* lambs…** Fourteen lambs are offered on each of the seven days of *Sukkot*, totaling ninety-eight. This number is denoted by the letters חץ (*ḥet, tsade*), which spell the word חץ (*ḥets*), "arrow," alluding to God's attack on the alien princes and their earthly nations.

466. **If so, we are being evil-eyed toward them…** By offering sacrifices whose totals (fourteen and ninety-eight)

allude to God's attack on the princes and their nations.

Rabbi Shim'on explains that Israel actually offers the sacrifices out of joy (since *Sukkot* is a time of joy), but this joy generates harm to Israel's enemies.

The context in Proverbs (25:21–22) reads: *If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For you will be heaping live coals on his head, and YHVH will reward you*. The biblical meaning is that treating one's enemy well actually ensures his subsequent torment or puts him to shame. See *Zohar* 1:174b; 2:185a, 262b (*Heikh*); 3:102a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 167. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 45; *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:1; and parallels.

467. **Well, the joy among all those princes…** Throughout the year, the heavenly princes of the nations derive some pleasure from various sacrifices, but that does not compare to the joy they experience from the numerous sacrifices on *Sukkot*. Nevertheless, these sacrifices are not offered directly to the princes, but rather to God, who then distributes a portion to each of them. On the demonic share of the sacrifices, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:453–54, 3:890–95.

468. **the waters designated here…** As explained above (note 458), Rabbi Yehudah son of Bateira finds a scriptural basis for the *Sukkot* water libation in verses describing the offerings brought on the second, sixth, and seventh days of the Festival. Thus, the waters of libation are "designated here… on the second, sixth, and seventh days."

Rabbi Shim'on finds a mnemonic for "the second, sixth, and seventh days" in the word בוז (*boz*), an infinitive absolute, meaning "to scorn," and whose letters—*bet, vav, zayin*—are numerically equivalent respectively to two, six, and seven. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Many waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. If a man offered all the wealth of his house for love*, בוז יבוזו לו (*boz yavuzu lo*), *they would surely scorn him*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on

may be associating the root בוז (*boz*) with ביזה (*bizah*), "spoil, booty, plunder," so the quotation here could imply בוז יבוזו לו (*boz yavuzu lo*), *On the days* בו״ז (*bet, vav, zayin*), *two, six, and seven, they will give him spoil*. See above at note 457; *Zohar* 3:54b (*Tos*); *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 29:33.

469. ***Many waters cannot quench love…*** Neither the waters of libation nor rivers of balsam can overwhelm the love that Israel feels toward God.

According to a rabbinic tradition, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. In the *Zohar*, these rivers represent streams of emanation flowing out of *Binah*, who is Herself identified as the World that is Coming. See above, p. 144, n. 279; p. 201, n. 44.

470. ***If a man offered…*** Rabbi Shim'on construes this clause as: If Samael offered everything to share in the love that the people of Israel feel toward God as they pour out the waters of libation.

On *a man* as referring to Samael, see *Tanḥuma, Vayishlaḥ* 8. For the full verse in Song of Songs, see above, note 468.

471. ***They would surely scorn him…*** For Samael and all the alien princes are considered "as a broken potsherd."

On the biblical mnemonic, see above, note 468. Cf. *Zohar* 3:54b–55a; 256a–b (*RM*).

472. **Their waters are distributed…** Samael and the alien princes benefit from the waters of libation only on the second, sixth, and seventh days of *Sukkot*—as indicated by the mnemonic בו״ז (*bet, vav, zayin*). (See above, note 468.) They receive no such benefit on the third, fourth, and fifth days of the Festival—as indicated by the mnemonic חרש (*ḥeres*), *a potsherd*, whose letters stand for חמישי (*ḥamishi*), "fifth; רביעי (*revi'i*), "fourth"; and שלישי (*shelishi*), "third."

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker,* חרש (*ḥeres*), *a potsherd, among potsherds of the earth! Does the clay say to the one forming it, "What are you doing? Your work has no handles*?"

473. **What about the first day?...** Why isn't the first day of *Sukkot* included in either of the mnemonics? Rabbi Shim'on explains that this day is in a class by itself, so Scripture does not refer to it as *the first day* or *day one*, but rather as *the fifteenth day of the seventh month* (Numbers 29:12), whereas the following days are called *the second day* (Numbers 29:17), *the third day* (ibid., 20), etc. Since the water libations are intended (at least partially) for the alien princes, it is fitting that "designation of days" of the libations by ordinal numbers begins with "the second day" because "there is no *good* on the second day."

This last statement refers to the fact that in the account of Creation in the opening chapter of Genesis, the expression *God saw that it was good* (or its variant) appears for each day except the second. Various reasons are offered for the lack of *that it was good*, including the notion that Hell was created on the second day, or that the process of division was created on that day—namely the division between the upper waters and the lower waters (Genesis 1:7).

So "waters are distributed" to the alien princes on the second, sixth, and seventh days; whereas on the third, fourth, and fifth days, "they remain." This apparently means that although the waters are poured in libation on those days as well, they "remain" unavailable to the alien princes. *Sullam* interprets "they remain" as meaning that the waters of libation remain unpoured on these three days. Cf. *Zohar* 3:54b (*Tos*), which indicates that the libations of water and wine were performed (only) on the second, sixth, and seventh days. But this contradicts the simple sense of Numbers 29 (regarding the wine libations) and M *Sukkah* 4:1 (regarding the water libations), according to which the libations were performed throughout all seven days of the Festival. See the preceding note.

On the reasons for the lack of *that it was good* in the account of the second day of Creation, see *Bereshit Rabbah*

4:6; BT *Pesaḥim* 54a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:22.

474. **how to enter the kernel of the nut…** That is, how to attain the holy essence, which is surrounded by demonic shells. On the image of kernel and shells, see above, p. 238, n. 17.

475. ***On the eighth day…*** Immediately following the seven days of *Sukkot* comes *Shemini Atseret*, whose name derives from this verse: ביום השמיני (*Ba-yom ha-shemini*), *On the eighth day, you shall have* עצרת (*atseret*), *a convocation* [or: *assembly, gathering*].

Having endured the time of Judgment from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur, and having brought offerings and libations for the alien forces, the people of Israel "penetrated all these shells." The description here recalls Israel's journey through the desert to reach the Promised Land. The "holy city" of Jerusalem symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whom Israel finally entered. She is known as עצרת (*atseret*), *a convocation*, or *a gathering*, because all the streams of emanation gather in Her, and because She symbolizes Jerusalem, where all of Israel gathers.

The clause *you shall have* implies that Israel alone delights with God on this day, unlike the previous seven days, when the alien princes shared in the celebration and offerings.

The word כנישין (*kenishin*), "gathered," derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Numbers 29:35, which renders תהיה לכם עצרת (*atseret tihyeh lakhem*), *You shall have a convocation*, as לכון כנישין תהון (*kenishin tehon lekhon*), "You shall be gathered together." See *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; Leviticus 23:36, and both Targums, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:64a; 2:187a; 3:96b, 104b, 197a.

On Israel as having God all to themselves on *Shemini Atseret*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:9; Vol. 8, pp. 182–83, n. 369. The word "chunks" renders גזיזין (*gezizin*), "chunks" or "fists." See BT *Berakhot* 18b: "He broke גזיזי דברדא (*gezizei de-*

varda), “chunks of ice.” See BT *Berakhot* 59a; *Yoma* 78b; *Bava Qamma* 5a, 42b; *Zohar* 2:75a (*RR*), 106a, 140b, 150a, 165a. On the Mountains of Darkness, see above, note 461.

476. **[260a]** Various manuscripts (including Es3, N32, OM1, Pr13, V18) and the Cremona edition continue here (3:259b) with a passage that appears in *Zohar* 1:10b–11a (Vol. 1, pp. 70–73), beginning with “Rabbi Shim’on opened” and ending with “because he gave nothing to the poor.” (Es3 includes the following passage on 1:11a; Vol. 1, pp. 73–75.) The Mantua edition (and nearly all subsequent editions) simply refer to the first passage without including it.

The short passage entitled *Parashat Rashei ha-Mattot*, appearing here in the standard editions (3:259b) does not appear in the early printed editions (Cremona or Mantua) nor in the manuscripts containing *Parashat Pineḥas* that I have examined. This passage was first printed in *Zohar Ḥadash* (see *ZḤ* 56c–d) and will be translated in Vol. 12. There is no *Parashat Mas’ei* in the *Zohar*.

In the Cremona edition, *Parashat Devarim* consists of the *Yanuqa*, which appears in the Mantua edition (and nearly all subsequent editions) as part of *Parashat Balaq* (*Zohar* 3:186a–192a; above, pages 245–96). See above, p. 245, n. 1. The Mantua edition (followed by nearly all subsequent editions) does not contain any material for *Parashat Devarim*, other than an editorial note indicating that the *Yanuqa* material appears in *Parashat Balaq*.

1. ***Parashat Va-Eṭḥannan…*** Regarding the immediately preceding *parashot*—namely *Mattot, Mas'ei*, and *Devarim*—see above, p. 658, n. 476.

Whoever devotes himself to Torah is protected from demonic forces "above" and earthly enemies "below."

Torah is identified with the Tree of Life, based on the description of wisdom in Proverbs 3:18: *A tree of life is she to those who grasp her*. See BT *Berakhot* 32b, 61b.

The context in Isaiah (38:1–2) reads: *In those days Hezekiah fell mortally ill, and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said, "Thus says YHVH: 'Set your house in order, for you are about to die; you will not live.'" Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to YHVH*. The same biblical passage appears in 2 Kings 20:1–2. This *Zohar* passage appears in a somewhat different version in *Zohar* 1:11a.

2. **nullifying that decree…** Whatever has been decreed against him, just as the decree against King Hezekiah was nullified when he turned back to God in sincere prayer (Isaiah 38:1–8).

3. **when he climbs into bed…** Before going to sleep, one should recite the *Shema*, thereby accepting upon himself "the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven."

During sleep, a person's soul ascends to heaven. On account of his unworthy or sinful conduct during the day that has just ended, he is burdened by sinful debts and actually deserves to die; but by consciously offering his soul as a pledge to God before sleep, he ensures that God will return the pledge. According to the *Zohar*, the pledge is delivered to *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—who is pictured as the Tree of Death. The phrase "to their places" means "to their respective bodies," lying in bed.

On the bedtime recital of the *Shema*, see BT *Berakhot* 4b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Even if one has recited the *Shema* in the synagogue, it is a *mitsvah* to recite it

upon his bed." Cf. *Zohar* 1:183a; 3:211a. On the phrase "the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven," see M *Berakhot* 2:2.

On offering one's soul in pledge, see BT *Berakhot* 5a, where Abbaye recommends that each night before going to bed, scholars should recite "a verse of compassion, such as *In Your hand I entrust my spirit. You redeem me, O YHVH, God of truth* (Psalms 31:6)." Traditionally, this verse is included in the bedtime recital of *Shema*. The verse begins: *In Your hand I entrust* [or: *commend, commit, deposit*] *my spirit*. See above, p. 404, n. 358.

On sleep as a taste of death, see BT *Berakhot* 57b: "Sleep is one-sixtieth of death." See above, p. 2, n. 5. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

4. **When the north wind awakens at midnight…** This is an auspicious time for devotees to rise from sleep, "stand at their stations," and engage in Torah, thereby participating with *Shekhinah*. She is known as *Matronita* and Assembly of Israel, and Her human devotees are called "sons of *Matronita*" and "members of the palace." The reason that most people awaken at midnight is that their souls (or "pledges") have been temporarily returned to them.

See BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "There was a harp suspended above [King] David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn." On this Talmudic passage and the midnight ritual (and on *Shekhinah* as Assembly of Israel), see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

5. **She and all members of the palace…** *Shekhinah*, accompanied by the souls of Her human devotees, approaches King *Tif'eret*.

6. **one should cleanse himself in every way…** By relieving himself and then washing his hands. Then he can "gird his weapons" by wrapping himself in a tallit and donning tefillin. Whereas at night he participated with

Shekhinah by engaging in Torah, now he prepares to unite the divine couple through prayer.

See BT *Berakhot* 14b–15a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "One who wishes to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven completely should relieve himself, wash his hands, don tefillin, recite *Shema*, and pray [the *Amidah*]. This is the complete Kingdom of Heaven." Cf. *Zohar* 3:120b.

7. **purifies himself with offerings…** That is, by reciting passages in the morning liturgy describing the sacrificial offerings. He then proceeds with various psalms (attributed to King David), including Psalm 145.

The phrase "tzitzit on his hem" is based on Numbers 15:38: *Speak to the Children of Israel, and you shall say to them that they should make for themselves* ציצת (*tsitsit*), *a tassel* [or: *fringe*], *on* כנפי (*kanfei*), *the hems* [or: *skirts*] *of, their garments for their generations and place on the tassel of the hem a cord* [or: *twist, thread*] *of* תכלת (*tekhelet*), *purple* [or: *bluish purple*; *violet*; *blue*]. On the significance of Psalm 145, see above, pp. 559–60, n. 175.

8. **During the prayer…** During the *Amidah*, one should stand perfectly straight, resembling the angels, who are similarly praising God. See BT *Berakhot* 10b, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Ya'akov: "One who prays must straighten his legs, as is said: *As for legs, they had a straight leg* (Ezekiel 1:7)."

The full verse in Ezekiel, describing the angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings), reads: *As for legs, they had a straight leg, and their feet were like a calf's foot. They gleamed like burnished bronze*. See Rashi, ad loc. On the passage in BT *Berakhot*, see JT *Berakhot* 1:1, 2c.

The verse in Zechariah reads: *If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and guard My courts, and I will let you move about among these standing here* [literally: *these standing ones*]. See Rashi, ad

loc., and on Daniel 7:16; *Zohar* 1:100a, 129b; 2:170a (Vol. 5, p. 490, n. 850), 241b.

9. ***Here, bless YHVH…*** On this verse, see BT *Menaḥot* 110a; *Zohar* 1:136a; 3:12b–13a.

10. **After he concludes the prayer…** Following the *Amidah*, one recites *Taḥanun* (Supplication). This prayer (recited on most weekdays) includes a confession of sins and a petition for grace. It is also known as *nefilat appayim* (falling upon the face, prostration), and originally it was recited in this position, though later it became customary to recite *Taḥanun* in a seated (or half-seated) posture with lowered head and one's face buried in the bend of the arm. Here, Rabbi Yose indicates that during *Taḥanun* a person should surrender his soul to *Shekhinah*, described as "the required place." On *Taḥanun* and *nefilat appayim*, see above, p. 613, n. 339.

11. **When prayer is concluded…** The words of prayer ascend and are fashioned into a crown, adorning God's head.

See *Shemot Rabbah* 21:4: "Rabbi Pinḥas said in the name of Rabbi Me'ir, and Rabbi Yirmeyah said in the name of Rabbi Abba, 'When the people of Israel prays, you do not find them all praying as one, but rather each assembly prays on its own, one after the other. When they have all finished, the angel appointed over prayers gathers all the prayers offered in all the synagogues and fashions them into crowns, which he places on the head of the blessed Holy One.'"

See *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20, 97a; *Midrash Tehillim* 88:2; *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:26); *Ma'yan Ḥokhmah* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:59); *Tosafot, Ḥagigah* 13b, s.v. *ve-qosher*; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 495; *Zohar* 1:37b, 132a, 162a, 167b, 168b–169a; 2:58a, 128b, 146b, 186a, 201b, 202b, 209a, 245b–246a (*Heikh*); 3:294b (*IZ*); Recanati on Genesis 19:27, 26a; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 148–54; Green, *Keter*, 20–41. On words splitting the

heavens, see *Zohar* 2:201a; 3:31b, 55a, 61a, 105a, 121b, 294a–b (*IZ*).

12. **he should intend his prayer as supplication…** See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 3:23. Cf. M *Berakhot* 4:4; *Avot* 2:13.

The context in Deuteronomy (3:23–25) reads: *I pleaded with YHVH at that time, saying, "My Lord, YHVH, You Yourself have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in the heavens and on the earth who could do like Your deeds and like Your power? Let me, please, cross over and see the good land that is across the Jordan, this good hill country and the Lebanon*."

13. **Whoever stands in prayer should straighten his legs…** During the *Amidah*, one should stand perfectly straight, resembling the angels, who are similarly praising God. (See above, note 8.) One should also cover his head and eyes with the tallit.

On the presence of *Shekhinah* during prayer, see BT *Sanhedrin* 22a, in the name of Shim'on the Ḥasid: "One who prays should consider himself as if *Shekhinah* were before him, as is said: *I set YHVH before me always* (Psalms 16:8)."

14. **In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava…** According to this venerable source, it is very dangerous to keep one's eyes open during the *Amidah*. At the very least, one should lower them toward the ground. Otherwise, the Angel of Death, who is described as "full of eyes," will come upon him prematurely.

On lowering one's eyes during prayer, see BT *Yevamot* 105b: "Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Shim'on son of Rabi were sitting. One of them opened, saying, 'One who prays must direct his eyes below….' The other said, 'His eyes should be directed above….' Meanwhile they were joined by Rabbi Yishma'el son of Rabbi Yose, who asked, 'In what are you engaged?' They replied, 'In the subject of prayer.' He said

to them, ‘My father said, “One who prays should direct his eyes below and his heart above.”’” On the Angel of Death as being “full of eyes,” see Vol. 8, p. 309, n. 63.

According to a rabbinic tradition, at the moment of death a person sees *Shekhinah*. Here, Rav Hamnuna Sava indicates that one who dares to see Her during the *Amidah* will be prevented from seeing Her as he dies, “at the moment that he needs Her.” See *Sifra, Nedavah* 2:12, 4a, in the name of Rabbi Dosa: “Scripture states: *No human can see Me and live* (Exodus 33:20). In their lifetime they do not see, but in their death they do!” See above, p. 327, n. 104.

According to another rabbinic tradition, certain virtuous heroes (including Moses, Aaron, and Miriam) died not by the power of the Angel of Death but rather by the kiss of God. A passage in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* extends this privilege to all the righteous. See *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 34:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128; above, p. 599, n. 294.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On the passage in *Yevamot*, see JT *Berakhot* 4:5, 8c; Rashi on BT *Berakhot* 34b, s.v. *ḥalonot; Turei Zahav, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 95; *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margaliot, par. 18; *Zohar* 1:132b.

15. **But how can he look at *Shekhinah*?...** Since one sees Her only at the moment of death (as explained in the preceding note). Rather, one should realize that *Shekhinah* is present during prayer (as mentioned above, note 13).

Rabbi Yose may be associating קיר (*qir*), *wall*, with Greek *kyrios*, “lord.” *Shekhinah*, the last *sefirah*, rules as Lord over the world. On *qir* and *kyrios*, see *Zohar* 1:228b; Vol. 5, p. 235, n. 125. Cf. Vol. 4, p. 75, n. 21. For rabbinic knowledge of the Greek term *kyrios*, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 11b, *Ḥullin* 139b.

According to BT *Berakhot* 5b (in the name of Rav or Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi): “How do we know that when one prays there should be nothing interposing between him and the wall? Because it says: *Hezekiah turned his face to*

the wall and prayed (Isaiah 38:2).” See *Zohar* 1:132a, 228a–b. For the context in Isaiah, see above, note 1.

16. **first arrange the praise of his Lord…** As in the opening three blessings of the *Amidah*. Afterward (as in the middle blessings), one presents personal requests. See BT *Berakhot* 32a, in the name of Rabbi Simlai.

17. **first אדני (*Adonai*) and then יהוה (*YHVH*)…** The verse in Deuteronomy (3:24) reads: אדני יהוה (*Adonai YHVH*), *My Lord, YHVH, You Yourself have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in the heavens and on the earth who could do like Your deeds and like Your power?* For the context, see above, note 12.

In this verse, the second divine name is written יהוה (*YHVH*) but pronounced as אלהים (*Elohim*). Rabbi Yehudah explains that the sequence of names proceeds from the last *sefirah, Shekhinah*—who is called אדני (*Adonai*)—to *Tif’eret* above, who is called יהוה (*YHVH*). She is symbolized by day, and He by night. The pronunciation of *YHVH* as *Elohim* may allude to *Shekhinah* (who is sometimes called *Elohim*), or to *Binah* (who is also called *Elohim*).

On the theme of “combining the quality of day with night, and of night with day,” see BT *Berakhot* 11b, where Rava and Abbaye indicate that light is mentioned in the evening prayers and darkness in the morning prayers “in order to mention the quality of day during the night and the quality of night during the day.” See *Zohar* 1:12b, 120b, 259a (*Hash*); 2:162a; 3:264a.

18. ***You Yourself have begun…*** Obviously, God began to show Moses His greatness long before this encounter, so “What beginning is here?” Rabbi Yehudah explains that Moses himself represents a radical “beginning in the world,” since he attained the rung of *Tif’eret*, which harmonizes right and left and is totally complete.

It is true that Jacob, too, represents *Tif’eret*, pictured as the cosmic tree. His twelve sons correspond to the twelve potencies of that tree, while the seventy people who

traditionally accompanied Jacob when he went to Egypt parallel *Tif'eret*'s seventy branches. But Moses surpassed him.

On the contrast between Jacob and Moses, see above, pp. 258–59, n. 36. On Jacob's being "complete," see above, pp. 67–68, n. 44. On the twelve potencies of the cosmic tree, see above, pp. 354–55, n. 197. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see the preceding note.

19. **He was completed with the whole body...** Moses (representing *Tif'eret*) included both right and left. Aaron symbolizes *Ḥesed* (the divine right arm), while Nahshon symbolizes *Gevurah* (the divine left arm). *Ḥesed* is also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness); *Gevurah* (Power) is indicated by the wording *Your mighty hand*.

Nahshon son of Amminadab from the tribe of Judah is renowned for his role at the Red Sea. According to rabbinic tradition, no one wanted to be the first to enter and cross, until finally Nahshon jumped in. See *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 5; BT *Sotah* 37a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 42; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:7. On Nahshon as symbolizing the divine left arm, see above, p. 206, n. 59.

20. ***YHVH will be one and His Name one*** This verse can imply that in the time of redemption, *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *His name*) *will* both *be one*. See above, p. 166, n. 41.

21. ***YHVH said to me, "Enough for you!...*** God refuses Moses' request to cross the Jordan. It is *enough* that he united with *Shekhinah*.

On Moses as the husband of *Shekhinah*, see Vol. 6, pp. 103–4, n. 128. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *And YHVH was wrathful* [or: *was cross*] *with me because of you, and He did not listen to me. YHVH said to me, "Enough for you! Speak no more to Me of this matter*."

22. **with the radiance of the sun...** Moses attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the sun. His successor,

Joshua, attained the rung of *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the moon.

According to rabbinic tradition, "The face of Moses was like the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon." See *Sifrei*, Numbers 140; BT *Bava Batra* 75a.

On the passage here, see *Zohar* 3:284a; cf. *Devarim Rabbah* 2:5. Deuteronomy 3:28 reads in full: *Command Joshua and imbue him with strength and courage, for he will cross over before this people and he will enable them to inherit the land that you will see*.

23. ***You, cleaving to YHVH your God…*** Israel is truly fortunate to be intimately close to God. The concluding phrase—"*YHVH*, truly!"—emphasizes that the people of Israel is blessed by *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), or that they are blessed by "His Name."

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!* The full verse in Psalms reads: *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* The verse in Isaiah reads: *All who see them recognize that they are seed YHVH has blessed*.

24. **appointed princes who rule over them…** Heavenly princes empowered over the nations of the world. See above, p. 50, n. 140.

On Torah as God's Name, see above, p. 26, n. 66. On the supposed Zoharic formula "The blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel are all one," see Vol. 7, pp. 490–91, n. 431.

25. ***YHVH spoke to you…*** The full verse reads: *YHVH spoke to you from the midst of the fire. A voice* [or: *a sound*] *of words you heard, an image you did not see—only a voice* [or: *a sound*]*!*

26. **קול דברים (*Qol devarim*), *A voice of words…*** Often, קול (*qol*), "voice," refers to *Tif'eret*, whereas דבור (*dibbur*), "speech," refers to *Shekhinah*. But in this verse, according to Rabbi El'azar, *Shekhinah* is called קול דברים (*qol devarim*), *a voice of words*.

The full verse from Exodus, introducing the Ten Commandments, reads: וידבר אלהים (*Va-ydabber Elohim*), *God spoke, all these words, saying*. The name *Elohim* refers here to *Shekhinah*, who is fittingly linked with verb וידבר (*va-ydabber*), *spoke*.

27. ***You heard…*** The clause *A voice of words you heard* links *Shekhinah* (*a voice of words*) with hearing, because "hearing depends only on" *Shekhinah*, who conveys God's word to human ears and through whom human prayer is heard. As mentioned above, She is also known as "speech."

The context in Exodus (21:5–6) relates to a Hebrew slave, who is normally set free after six years: *If the slave declares, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go free," his master shall make him approach* האלהים (*ha-Elohim*), *the gods* [interpreted traditionally as: *the judges*], *and make him approach the door or the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever*.

See *Tosefta Bava Qamma* 7:5, in the name of Rabban Yoḥanan son of Zakkai: "Now, why was the ear singled out from all the limbs to be pierced? Because it heard on Mount Sinai: *For Mine are the Children of Israel as servants* (Leviticus 25:55), and yet this [person] broke off the yoke of heaven and accepted upon himself a yoke of flesh-and-blood. Therefore Scripture states: 'Let the ear come and be pierced, since it did not fulfill what it heard!'"

By refusing to leave his human master, the slave in effect spurns divine dominion. Here Rabbi El'azar adds that since hearing depends on *Shekhinah*, a slave who refuses to go free spurns and impairs Her, so he is fittingly punished by having his ear pierced.

See *Zohar* 3:108a–b. On the passage in *Tosefta*, see also *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 2; JT *Qiddushin* 1:2, 59d; BT *Qiddushin* 22b; Rashi on Exodus 21:6; *Zohar* 2:192a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 232. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, note 25.

28. ***An image you did not see…*** This *image* apparently refers to *Tif'eret*, as demonstrated by the verse in Numbers, where *the image of YHVH* means "the image of *Tif'eret*," who is known as *YHVH*.

See *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*. For another interpretation, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Numbers (spoken by God about Moses) reads: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him;* ומראה (*u-mar'eh*), *and a vision* [or: *and clearly*; *manifestly*; *in plain sight*], *not in riddles; and the image of YHVH he beholds*. See *Zohar* 3:72a.

29. **an inner voice…** The hidden realm of *Binah*, whom Israel could not perceive. Rather, they saw "*only* another *voice*," namely *Shekhinah*.

Binah is called *an image* because the entire configuration of bodily limbs (from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*) issues from Her.

30. **Another is also called so…** *Shekhinah* is also known as *an image*, one that contains all the other sefirotic images. Rabbi El'azar explains that just as the configuration of the sefirotic limbs issues from the image of *Binah*, so "the configuration (of angels) below," pictured as a body, issues from *Shekhinah*.

The feminine marker ה (*he*) appears twice in the name יהוה (*YHVH*). The first (or "upper") *he* symbolizes *Binah*; the second, *Shekhinah*. The flow of emanation from the *mighty voice* of *Binah* is *unceasing*. At the Revelation at Mount Sinai, all the sefirotic voices issued from "that inner voice" of *Binah*.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *These words YHVH spoke to your whole assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the dense fog—a mighty voice, adding no more*. The final expression, ולא יסף (*ve-lo yasaf*), means literally *and He did not add*. Here, Rabbi El'azar follows a midrashic interpretation of the clause: "and it did not cease." See *Targum Onqelos* on the verse: ולא פסיק (*ve-la phasiq*), "and not ceasing." See JT *Megillah* 1:4, 70d; BT *Sotah* 10b, *Sanhedrin* 17a; *Bemidbar Rabbah*

20:21; Rashi, *Leqaḥ Tov*, and Naḥmanides on the verse; *Zohar* 1:50b; 2:81a–b, 226b; 3:6b. Cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 28:6.

On *Shekhinah* as the all-inclusive image, see above, pp. 318, n. 66. On the angelic body, see *Zohar* 1:245a–b; 2:142a–b; Idel, "Olam ha-Mal'akhim bi-Dmut Adam."

On the (seven) voices heard at Mount Sinai, see *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 25, *Yitro* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 28:6; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:6; 92:3. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 6b. On the sefirotic voices issuing from *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:81a–b; 3:38b–29a.

31. **That which is called *Mishneh Torah*, the Repetition of Torah…** In rabbinic literature, the book of Deuteronomy is referred to as משנה תורה (*Mishneh Torah*), "the Repetition of Torah," since it contains Moses' summary of laws and history from earlier books of the Torah. The phrase *mishneh torah* appears in Deuteronomy 17:18 and is translated in the Septuagint as *Deuteronomion*, "a second Law," which became the Greek name of the book and ultimately its English name, Deuteronomy.

Rabbi El'azar indicates that Moses conveyed the teachings of *Mishneh Torah* (or Deuteronomy) "from his own mouth." This formulation derives from BT *Megillah* 31b, where Abbaye distinguishes between the list of curses in Leviticus 26 and the later list in Deuteronomy 28: "The former [curses] are stated in the plural [i.e., addressed to all Israel] and Moses uttered them מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), from the mouth of [Divine] Power [i.e., conveying God's speech]; the latter are stated in the singular and Moses uttered them מפי עצמו (*mi-pi atsmo*), from his own mouth [i.e., in his own formulation and in his own name]." For example, the list in Leviticus reads: *If you* [plural] *do not heed Me* (Leviticus 26:14), conveying divine speech, whereas the list in Deuteronomy reads: *It shall be, if you* [singular] *do not heed the voice of YHVH your God*… (Deuteronomy 28:15).

Ḥokhmah (Wisdom) is the source or "totality" of Torah, from which issues the stream of divine teaching through

Binah (“that inner voice”). Then “all settles” in the sefirotic Tree of Life, upon which depend the generalities of Written Torah (symbolizing *Tif’eret*) and the particulars of Oral Torah (symbolizing *Shekhinah*). Since the Tree of Life encompasses both aspects of Torah (Written and Oral), it is called *Mishneh Torah*, understood as “Double Torah.”

On the passage in *Megillah*, see *Zohar* 3:7a, 115a, 265a. On the phrase *mi-pi ha-gevurah*, “from the mouth of Power,” see Vol. 4, p. 439, n. 262. For various interpretations of this paragraph and the following one, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

32. **At first, *Gevurah*, unceasing…** The original revelation to Moses at Sinai was conveyed מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), “from the mouth of [Divine] Power.” Rabbi El’azar associates *Gevurah* with its source, *Binah*, whose flow is “unceasing.” (See above, note 30.)

However, “now, all as one”—that is, now that the Ten Commandments are repeated in the book of *Mishneh Torah* (or Deuteronomy), they reflect both “the general and the particular, Written Torah and Oral Torah,” representing *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*. To signify the joining of the two qualities, commandments seven-through-ten each begin: ולא (*ve-lo*), *And* [*you shall*] *not*, whereas in the original version of the Ten Commandments (in Exodus), these commandments begin: לא (*lo*), [*You shall*] *not*, without the conjunction ו (*ve*), *and*.

This teaching on the additional *ands* in the second version of the Ten Commandments (in Deuteronomy) plays on the midrashic explanation in *Leqaḥ Tov*, Deuteronomy 5:12. Cf. *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:13; *Ba’al ha-Turim* on Deuteronomy 5:17; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 20:13–14, n. 395.

33. **What is meant by ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit’avveh*), *and you shall not desire*…** The full verse (Deuteronomy 5:18) reads: ולא תחמד (*Ve-lo taḥmod*), *And you shall not covet, your*

neighbor's wife, ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit'avveh*), *and you shall not desire, your neighbor's house, his field, or his male or female slave, his ox or his donkey, or anything that your neighbor has*. Rabbi Yose wonders why Scripture adds the apparently synonymous verb *tit'avveh*, when *taḥmod* would suffice. In the parallel verse in Exodus 20:14, the expression לא תחמד (*lo taḥmod*), *you shall not covet*, appears in both clauses.

34. **Happy are the masters of truth!...** Who know how to distinguish between *you shall not covet* and *you shall not desire*. Coveting leads a person to obtain what is not his, in whatever way he can (legally or illegally), and that is certainly forbidden. But even if one simply desires what belongs to someone else, without trying to obtain it, he still violates an essential commandment.

See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 8; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 5:18; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Ḥoshen Mishpat* 359:10; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Gezelah va-Avedah* 1:9–11; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Ḥoshen Mishpat* 359:10. Cf. *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:14.

35. **Why isn't it written ולא תרצח (*Ve-lo tirtsaḥ*), *And you shall not murder*...** As mentioned above (at note 32), in the Ten Commandments (in Deuteronomy), commandments seven-through-ten each begin: ולא (*ve-lo*), *And* [*you shall*] *not*. Rabbi Yose wonders why the sixth commandment begins: לא (*lo*), [*You shall*] *not*, without the conjunction ו (*ve*), *and*. The simple explanation, of course, is that this is the first of the negative commandments, so *and* is unnecessary and inappropriate; but Rabbi Yose is searching for a deeper reason.

36. **Because Judgment depends on *Gevurah*...** The act of murder reflects the harsh quality of Judgment, which derives from *Gevurah* on the left side, not from the realm of Compassion (identified with *Tif'eret*). Compassion and *Tif'eret* are symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*) in the name יהוה (*YHVH*), so

fittingly this “murderous” commandment “is not written with a ו (*vav*).”

However, “five ווין (*vavs*) are needed” here in the second half of the Ten Commandments, in order to represent the five *sefirot* surrounding *Tif’eret* (*Ḥesed, Gevurah, Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*)—or perhaps in order to represent the letter ה (*he*), which is numerically equivalent to five and which symbolizes *Tif’eret*’s partner, *Shekhinah*. The fifth ו (*vav*) is provided at the beginning of ולא תתאוה (*ve-lo tit’avveh*), *and you shall not desire*.

On the association of death with the lack of ו (*vav*), see *Zohar* 1:33b; 3:176b. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

37. **Rabbi Pinḥas, who was sitting behind him…** That is, behind Rabbi El’azar.

According to the *Zohar*, Rabbi Pinḥas is the father-in-law of Rabbi Shim’on and thus Rabbi El’azar’s grandfather. Here he praises both of them—the young cub and the mature lion—and celebrates his relation to them.

On Rabbi Pinḥas and his Zoharic role as Rabbi Shim’on’s father-in-law, see above, pp. 418–19, n. 402. On Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Shim’on as lions, see above, p. 382, n. 283. On the expression “wept and laughed,” see above, p. 586, n. 257.

38. ***You go near…*** The full verse reads: *You go near and hear all that YHVH our God says, and it is you who will speak to us all that YHVH our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do*.

39. **When the Torah was given to Israel…** At Mount Sinai, all the sefirotic voices (or “faces”) were manifested, each one “seen within” the other.

Fire symbolizes *Gevurah*, water symbolizes *Ḥesed*, and wind symbolizes *Tif’eret*. All three sefirotic elements issue from *Binah*, who is pictured as a shofar.

On seeing the voices at Sinai (and on Israel’s reaction to the entire experience), see Exodus 20:15: *All the people*

were seeing הקולת (*ha-qolot*), *the thunderings* [or: *the voices*], *and the flashes and* קול (*qol*), *the sound* [or: *the voice*] *of, the shofar and the mountain smoking, and the people saw and trembled and they stood at a distance*. See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: "*All the people were seeing* הקולות (*ha-qolot*), *the thunderings* [or: *the voices*].... They were seeing the fiery word issuing from the mouth of Power and being engraved on the tablets." See Vol. 4, pp. 442–43, n. 276. On *Binah* as the shofar, see, e.g., *Zohar* 1:114a–b; 2:81b, 184b; 3:38b, 99b (*Piq*), 266b.

40. **ואת תדבר (*Ve-at tedabber*), *And it is you who will speak...*** According to its simple sense in this verse, the word את (*at*) represents a rare (archaic) form of the masculine pronoun "you"—referring, of course, to Moses. Normally, though, *at* indicates the feminine form of the pronoun "you," as opposed to the classical masculine form אתה (*attah*).

Adopting the normal feminine sense of *at*, Rabbi El'azar construes it here as alluding to the Divine Feminine, *Shekhinah*. Overwhelmed by the masculine power of *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*), Israel pleaded with Moses: ואת תדבר (*Ve-at tedabber*), *Let at*—namely *Shekhinah*—*speak, to us*. (The verb *tedabber* can mean either "you will speak" or "she will speak," and Rabbi El'azar apparently adopts the latter sense.)

In response, Moses accused Israel of weakening both his power and God's power by their refusal to continue hearing God's masculine voice. According to a rabbinic tradition, at Mount Sinai God began speaking to Israel directly, but after hearing the first two of the Ten Commandments the Israelites were overwhelmed and they asked Moses to convey the rest of the revelation to them.

On the wording *ve-at tedabber*, see Rashi on Deuteronomy 5:24. Cf. above, p. 408, n. 370; *Berakhot* 32a. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, note 38.

On Israel's asking Moses to convey the revelation after hearing the first two commandments, see *Shir ha-Shirim*

Rabbah on 1:2; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 22, 111a; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:7. Cf. BT *Makkot* 24a, *Horayot* 8a. See also Exodus 20:16: *They said to Moses, "Speak you with us that we may hear, and let not God speak with us lest we die*." On the notion of Israel's weakening God, see above, pp. 92–93, n. 115.

41. **Because the first time, they died…** When God began to proclaim the Ten Commandments, Israel could not bear the power of the divine voice and they died. This was due to *Shekhinah*, who is identified as the Tree of Death. They were immediately revived and sought to enter the Tree of Life, symbolizing *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*). However, since they drew back out of fear, Moses' power was weakened—and God's power, too.

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41: "The first voice [conveying the first of the Ten Commandments] came forth…. and the people of Israel… fell on their faces and died. Then the second voice came forth, and they revived and stood on their feet and said to Moses, 'Moses our master, we cannot hear the voice of the blessed Holy One and die as we just died,' as is said: *My soul departed as he spoke* (Song of Songs 5:6). And it is written: *They said to Moses, 'Speak you with us that we may hear*, [*and let not God speak with us lest we die*].'"

See BT *Shabbat* 88b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi: "With every utterance that came forth from the mouth of the blessed Holy One, the souls of Israel departed, as is said: *My soul departed as he spoke*. But since their souls departed at the first utterance, how could they receive the second utterance? He brought down dew, with which He will one day revive the dead, and revived them."

On this theme, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:6, 16; *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiqra* 1; *Shemot Rabbah* 29:4, 9. On *Shekhinah* as the Tree of Death, see above, p. 9, n. 19.

42. **I wanted to establish you in an exalted place…** God wanted Israel to attain the rung of *Tif'eret* (or the realm of *Ze'eir Anpin*), symbolized by the Tree of Life; but out of fear, they preferred the lower rung of *Shekhinah*, the Divine Feminine. Fittingly, God told them, *Return to your tents*—to unite with their wives.

See BT *Shabbat* 87a: "[Moses] separated himself from his wife. What did he interpret? He applied an a fortiori argument to himself, reasoning: 'If regarding the Israelites —with whom *Shekhinah* spoke only on one occasion and for whom He set a time—Torah said, *Ready yourselves for three days; do not go near a woman* (Exodus 19:15), then I, with whom *Shekhinah* speaks at all times and for whom He does not set a time, how much more so!' And how do we know that the blessed Holy One gave His approval? Because it is written: *Go, say to them, 'Return to your tents'* (Deuteronomy 5:27) [interpreted midrashically as meaning "Return to your wives"], which is followed by *And you, stand here with Me* (ibid., 28)."

On this Talmudic passage, see BT *Yevamot* 62a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; B, 2; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 13; *Shemot Rabbah* 19:3; 46:3. Cf. *Sifra, Metsora* 1:11, 71b; below, note 44.

The hermeneutical principle קל וחומר (*qal va-ḥomer*), "a fortiori" (from the stronger), refers to a conclusion that is inferred to be even more certain than another: "If *x* is true, then certainly *y* is true."

43. **Nevertheless, since Israel acted…** The people withdrew from the direct encounter with *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) because they were overwhelmed by awe, not out of any sinful intention. So God did not punish them; rather, He expressed the wish that they would always revere Him.

In the concluding sentence, the phrase "another person" means "someone who sins intentionally." On the notion that one who commits a transgression

unintentionally is not punished, cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 1:4; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Would that they had this heart of theirs to revere Me and to keep My commands for all time, so that it would go well with them and with their children forever!*

44. ***And you, stand here with Me…*** From the moment of the revelation at Mount Sinai, Moses separated from his wife—and from the Divine Female, *Shekhinah*—and cleaved to Divine Male.

The adjective *good* alludes to *Yesod* (who is known as Righteous One), based on Isaiah 3:10: *Say of the righteous one that he is good*. The fact that Moses is described as *good* alludes to his attainment of *Yesod*. That is, he now *stands* on this sefirotic rung, which is above *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *holy ground*.

On the implication of *And you, stand here with Me*, see the passage in BT *Shabbat* 87a (quoted above, note 42). On Moses' celibacy, see the parallels cited in note 42 (above); Vol. 6, p. 271, n. 27. The context in Deuteronomy (5:27–28) reads: *Go, say to them, "Return to your tents. And you, stand here with Me, and I will speak to you all the commands and the statutes and the laws that you will teach them, and they will do them in the land that I am giving them to possess."*

On the verse in Isaiah (*Say of the righteous one that he is good*), see BT *Yoma* 38b, *Ḥagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:30b, 33a, 60a, 82b; 2:11b, 128b, 176b (*SdTs*); 3:16a, 110b. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I find woman more bitter than death. For she is all snares, and her heart nets, and her arms fetters. He who is good before God will escape her, and a sinner will be trapped by her.*

The full verse in Exodus 2 (describing the birth of Moses) reads: *The woman conceived and bore a son, and she saw that he was good and she hid him three months.*

See above, p. 258, n. 35. Cf. BT *Menaḥot* 53b; *Midrash Tehillim* 125:4.

The full verse in Exodus 3 (whose setting is the Burning Bush) reads: *He said, "Do not come any closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground*." See *Zohar* 2:222a; 3:284b.

45. **What about David?...** If *good* alludes to *Yesod*, then King David should be associated with that rung, since he is described as *good-looking*. Why, then, is he associated with *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)? "Why wasn't he greater?"—that is, Why isn't he linked with the higher rung of *Yesod*?

Rabbi El'azar responds by focusing on the phrase טוב ראי (*tov ro'i*), *good-looking*. The word רֹאִי (*ro'i*), *looking*, suggests רְאִי (*re'i*), "a mirror," alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is like a mirror reflecting all the divine lights. David attained the quality of *Yesod*—or *tov*, *good*—from *re'i*, the "mirror" of *Shekhinah*. Moses, on the other hand, *was good* himself, since he attained *Yesod* directly. Nevertheless, since *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* are united, David "inhabited both."

After attaining *Yesod*, Moses ascended higher to *Tif'eret*, pictured as the trunk of the divine body. He embodied the divine *man*.

On the sefirotic sense of איש (*ish*), *man*, see *Zohar* 3:48a–49a. The verse in Samuel reads: *He was ruddy, with fine eyes* וטוב ראי (*ve-tov ro'i*), *and good-looking* [or: *and goodly to look on*].

46. **In all his actions...** Cf. Psalms 16:8: *I set YHVH before me always*.

The formulation "Whoever is walking on the road should focus his attention on three things" is based on a rabbinic statement concerning Jacob when he was journeying to meet his long-lost brother Esau: "He prepared himself for three things: for prayer, for [offering] a gift, and for battle."

Rabbi Yehudah adds that prayer is the highest of these three, yet even more important while one is on the road is

to engage in Torah with two or three others.

For the rabbinic statement about Jacob's preparations, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 19:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:18; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlaḥ* 6; *Zohar* 1:204b–205a; 3:269a.

On the importance of engaging in Torah while walking or traveling, see above, p. 319, n. 69. On the presence of *Shekhinah* among two or three people engaging in Torah, see M *Avot* 3:6; BT *Berakhot* 6a; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:21. Cf. *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:9.

47. ***YHVH Elohim made coats of skin…*** According to this verse, after Adam and Eve sinned, *YHVH Elohim made* כתנות עור (*kotnot or*), *coats of skin, for Adam and his wife*.

Rabbi El'azar's statement "Yes—but garments of glory" is ambiguous, as we soon see. The expression מאני יקר (*manei yeqar*), "garments of glory," is a paraphrase of *Targum Onqelos* on the verse, which renders כתנות עור (*kotnot or*), *coats of skin*, as "לבושין דיקר (*levushin di-yqar*), garments of glory, on the skin of their flesh." This image matches a rabbinic tradition about a variant reading of כתנות עור (*kotnot or*), *coats of skin*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:12: "In the Torah [scroll] of Rabbi Me'ir, it was found written: 'כתנות אור (*kotnot or*), *garments of light*.' These are the clothes of Adam…." These *garments of light* constituted Adam and Eve's original aura. Elsewhere the *Zohar* teaches that as a result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve lost their lustrous *coats of light* and spiritual nature, fell into mortality, and from then on were clothed in human *coats of skin*.

On *kotnot or*, *coats of skin* (or *of light*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:6; 20:12 (and Theodor's note); *Zohar* 1:36b, 224a; 2:179a (*SdTs*), 208b (Vol. 6, p. 189, n. 238), 229b; 3:83a–b (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 404; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 404, n. 87.

On *coats of skin* as referring to Adam and Eve's own skin, see also BT *Niddah* 25a; *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *she-ein*; Ibn Ezra and David Kimḥi on Genesis 3:21; Kasher, *Torah*

Shelemah, Genesis 3:21, nn. 176, 186. For Gnostic parallels, see Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4:40; *Apocryphon of John* 23:31–35; *Hypostasis of the Archons* 90:16; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1:5:5.

48. **If so, they didn't deserve them…** Rabbi Ḥiyya assumes that Adam and Eve's כתנות עור (*kotnot or*), *coats of skin*, were actually "garments of glory." But if so, "they didn't deserve them," since they had sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge. He adds that from the biblical context, God obviously *clothed them* with these *coats of skin* after they had sinned. See *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*.

49. **Certainly so!…** Rabbi El'azar agrees that after having sinned, Adam and Eve did not deserve "garments of glory." But previously, he explains, they manifested a spiritual nature and were clothed in such garments. Then, after they ate from the Tree of Knowledge, God stripped them of their ethereal quality and fittingly clothed them in *coats of skin*. See above, note 47.

50. ***Aaron and his sons you shall bring forward…*** The biblical context is the installation of the priests. Rabbi El'azar indicates that the priestly "כתנות (*kotnot*), tunics of, linen" retained some of the splendor of Adam and Eve's original garments of glory, "corresponding to the pattern above." In contrast, Adam and Eve's כתנות (*kotnot*), *coats of, skin* were of an earthly nature, "corresponding to the pattern below." Yet even so, Adam and Eve's garments were incomparably beautiful.

After its initial use to refer to Adam and Eve's garments, the word *kotnot* appears in the Bible only in reference to the priestly tunics. On these being of linen, see Exodus 28:39; 39:27. The word שש (*shesh*), "linen," can also mean "six," and according to rabbinic tradition, the linen yarn used in the priestly garments consisted of six strands. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* indicates that by wearing garments of *shesh* (*linen*),

the priest was arrayed, as it were, in all *shesh* (six) *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*. See BT *Yoma* 71b–72a; *Zohar* 2:232b, 234a.

On the similarity between the priestly garments and Adam and Eve's original garments of glory, see *Zohar* 2:229b; cf. 1:217a. On the desirable quality of the original garments, see Vol. 6, p. 189, n. 238; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Genesis 3:21, n. 184. The quotation here from Exodus conflates 29:4 and 29:8.

51. ***The eyes of the two were opened…*** Describing what happened to Adam and Eve immediately after eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. According to Rabbi El'azar, they now became aware of (and enmeshed in) the material world and no longer gazed upon the spiritual realm. In the Messianic age, God will restore spiritual vision and wisdom.

"The form" renders טיפסא (*tifsa*), which derives from Greek *tupos*, "form, shape, figure, pattern, mold, matrix." See *Zohar* 1:20b, 96b; 3:120a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 179, s.v. *tifsa*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David* , s.v. *tifsa*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The eyes of the two were opened, and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves and made themselves loincloths*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *I will lead the blind by a road they do not know; by paths they do not know I will conduct them. I will turn darkness before them into light, rough ground into a plain. These are the words—I will fulfill them and not abandon them*.

52. **the Book of Concealment…** According to this cryptic text, "Three cavities of inscribed letters are revealed in the skull of *Ze'eir Anpin*." See *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*). *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) is the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Yesod*. The cavities of His skull enclose three brains, corresponding to *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*. A fourth brain also appears in the skull of *Ze'eir Anpin*, issuing from the concealed brain of *Attiqa Qaddisha* (the Holy Ancient One), which is the highest sefirotic configuration, corresponding

to *Keter*. These four brains spread throughout the sefirotic body of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

The four brains correspond to the four compartments in the *tefillah* (phylactery) worn on the head, which in turn correspond to the four letters of the Holy Name *YHVH*. The "inscribed letters" of the "three cavities" are the first three letters of this Name.

Each of the two tefillin contains four passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) written on parchment. In the *tefillah* of the hand all four passages are written on one piece of parchment, whereas the *tefillah* of the head is divided into four compartments, and each of the four passages, written on a separate piece of parchment, is inserted in its own compartment. See BT *Menaḥot* 34b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefillin* 3:5; Vol. 1, p. 96, n. 719. On the significance of tefillin, see above, p. 73, n. 56. On the significance of the four compartments, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 4; *Zohar* 1:14a; 2:43a–b (*Piq*), 162a; 3:140a (*IR*), 236b, 263a, 264a, 269a, 291a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 31c.

The notion that God Himself wears tefillin appears in BT *Berakhot 6a*: "Rabbi Avin son of Rabbi Adda said in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak, 'How do we know that the blessed Holy One puts on tefillin? For it is said: *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength* (Isaiah 62:8). *By His right hand*—this is Torah, as is said: *From His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). *And by the arm of His strength*—this is tefillin, as is said: *YHVH will give strength unto His people* (Psalms 29:11). How do we know that tefillin are a strength to Israel? For it is written: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you* (Deuteronomy 28:10), and it has been taught: Rabbi Eli'ezer the Great says, "This refers to the tefillin of the head."' Rabbi Naḥman son of Yitsḥak asked Rabbi Ḥiyya son of Avin, 'These tefillin of the Master of the Universe—what

is written in them?' He replied, '*Who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on earth?* (1 Chronicles 17:21).'" On this Talmudic passage, see Vol. 4, p. 489, n. 442.

Galen recognized four ventricles (or cavities) of the brain, but some medieval scholars distinguished only three. See Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 31:3 (and *Qarnei Or*, ad loc.); idem on Isaiah 44:18; Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* 9, 26–c; *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:136a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*), 142b (*IR*), 292b–293a (*IZ*), 294b (*IZ*); Siegel, *Galen's System of Physiology and Medicine*, 118–23; Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, 63; Gross, *Brain, Vision, Memory*, 28–35.

The term "channels" renders רהיטי (*rehitei*), whose root—רהט (*rht*)—means "to run, move swiftly." See Genesis 30:38, 41; Exodus 2:16; and Song of Songs 7:6: *The dangling locks of your head like royal purple; a king is captured* [or: *bound*] ברהטים (*ba-rehatim*), *by the flowing tresses*. This last verse is linked with tefillin in *Zohar* 1:13b–14a; 3:269b; *TZ* 6, 21b; *TZ*, add. 6, 144b. Cf. Rashi on Song of Songs 7:6; *Zohar* 1:161a–b. On the "channels in the four compartments of tefillin," cf. also *Zohar* 1:162a (*ST*); 3:293a–b (*IZ*). This formulation resembles the phrase "channels of the brain," on which see below, p. 816, n. 146.

On this Zoharic passage, see *Zohar* 3:140a (*IR*). On *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment), see Vol. 5, p. xii; p. 545, n. 1; pp. 587–88. On the term *Ze'eir Anpin*, see above, pp. 22–23, n. 57.

53. **Therefore a person should put them on every day...** By wearing tefillin daily, one displays the Name *YHVH*, whose four letters correspond to the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head.

The verse is Deuteronomy is linked specifically with the *tefillah* of the head in BT *Berakhot* 6a (quoted in the preceding note): "Rabbi Avin son of Rabbi Adda said in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak, '... How do we know that tefillin are a strength to Israel? For it is written: *All the peoples of the*

earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you (Deuteronomy 28:10), and it has been taught: Rabbi Eli'ezer the Great says, "This refers to the tefillin of the head."'"

On the verse in Deuteronomy in connection with tefillin, see also Vol. 8, p. 416, n. 340. The verse reads: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is called over you* [or: *proclaimed over you*] [or: *that you are called by the name of YHVH*].... This idiom means that *YHVH* recognizes Israel as His own. See 2 Samuel 12:28; Isaiah 4:1.

The commandment of tefillin was widely disregarded in France and Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The *Zohar*, seeking to reinforce the commitment to this *mitsvah*, emphasizes its mystical significance. See *Tosafot, Shabbat* 49a, s.v. *ke-elisha*; Baer, *History*, 1:250; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1161–65.

54. **The higher brain flowing into the lower brain...** The brain of *Attiqa Qaddisha* (the Holy Ancient One) flowing into the brain of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One). See above, note 52.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Wisdom cries aloud outside, in the squares she lifts her voice*. The rare singular noun חכמות (*ḥokhmot*), *wisdom*, appears at first glance to be the plural of the more usual term חכמה (*ḥokhmah*), *wisdom*. This plural form has been described by grammarians as expressing majesty or intensification. Here, the *Zohar* construes the word's unusual form as indicating an intrinsic plurality—and as referring to the two divine brains. With the phrase "expressed as one," the *Zohar* construes the verse's singular verbs and singular pronoun as implying that the two brains are united when the higher flows to the lower. See *Zohar* 3:131b (*IR*), 140a (*IR*); cf. 1:141b.

55. ***Consecrate unto Me every firstborn...*** This verse is near the beginning of the first of the four passages contained in the four compartments of the *tefillah*

(phylactery) of the head. (See above, note 52.) This verse (and passage) represent the sefirotic crown of *Ḥokhmah*, which encompasses all the *sefirot* below. Being the primordial point, *Ḥokhmah* is pictured as the *firstborn*. The "unspecified" wording *every firstborn* includes the hidden flow from *Keter* above. *Ḥokhmah* opens that flow of emanation and conveys it to the lower *sefirot*.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *Consecrate unto Me every firstborn, breach of every womb among the Children of Israel, of human and beast—it is Mine*.

56. **concealed in the י (*yod*) of the Holy Name...** The primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* is symbolized by the point-like letter י (*yod*) in the Name יהוה (*YHVH*). This *sefirah* and this letter correspond to the first compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, which contains the passage *Consecrate unto Me every firstborn*. *Ḥokhmah* represents the first of *Ze'eir Anpin*'s three brains. (See above, note 52.)

57. **Second: *So when* [*YHVH*] *brings you*** The second compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head contains the biblical passage beginning with this verse. (See above, note 52.) The full verse reads: *So when YHVH brings you to the land of the Canaanite as He swore to you and to your father and gives it to you*.

58. **The brain whose gates bring forth fifty gates...** This second compartment corresponds to the brain (and *sefirah*) of *Binah*, who is often described as having fifty gates, through which the flow of emanation streams below. These fifty gates correspond to the (supposedly) fifty times that "the memory of Egypt is mentioned" in the Torah.

The Exodus itself is referred to more than fifty times in the Torah, but according to one enumeration there are fifty instances in which God seeks to remind Israel of the Exodus. See *Zohar* 1:261b (*Hash*); 2:83b–84a, 85b; *ZḤ* 31a; *TZ* 6, 22a; 30, 74b; 32, 76b; 39, 79b; Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 13:1–2; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; ibid. on *Zohar* 2:85b, n. 2; ibid., on *ZḤ*, 124b–d; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The image of *Binah*'s fifty gates derives from a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*), understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

59. **the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** According to this venerable source, God burst open the many gates of the brain of *Binah*, thereby breaking open many lower gates (apparently of *Shekhinah*), through which judgment was executed upon the Egyptians and Israel was redeemed. On Rav Hamnuna and his book, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

60. **All is sealed in this...** All of the liberating power is sealed in the Supernal Mother (*Binah*), who conveys power to Mother Below (*Shekhinah*).

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Hearken to Me, My people*, ולאומי אלי האזינו (*u-l'ummi elai ha'azinu*), *and My nation, give ear to Me*. Drawing on a midrashic source, Rabbi Yehudah reads the word לאומי (*le'ummi*), *My nation*, as if it were spelled without the letter ו (*vav*) following the א (*alef*)—לאמי—and he construes this as לְאִמִּי (*le-immi*), *to My mother*, alluding to the Divine Mother, *Shekhinah*.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai asked Rabbi El'azar son of Rabbi Yose, 'Perhaps you have heard from your father the meaning of [*O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon*,] *upon the crown with which his mother crowned him* (Song of Songs 3:11)?' He replied, 'Yes.' He asked him, 'How [did he explain it]?' He replied, 'Like a king who had an only daughter whom he loved lavishly, calling her "my daughter." He went on loving her until he called her "my sister." He went on loving her until he called her "my mother." So the blessed Holy One loved Israel lavishly and called them "My daughter".... He went on loving them until He called them "My sister."... He went on loving them until He called them "My mother," as is said: *Hearken to Me, My people*, אלי האזינו

ולאומי (*u-l'ummi elai ha'azinu*), *and My nation, give ear to Me* (Isaiah 51:4)—it is spelled ולאמי.' Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai stood and kissed him on his head, saying, 'If I have come just to hear this interpretation from your mouth, it is enough for me!'"

Here Rabbi Yehudah applies this midrash to *Shekhinah*, who is known as Assembly of Israel. Her partner, *Tif'eret*, "went on loving" Her so much that He called Her אמי (*immi*), "My mother."

On the midrashic passage, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pequdei* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 52:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Bahir* 63 (43); Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:156b (*ST*); 2:100b; 3:7b; *ZḤ* 91c (*MhN, Eikhah*); Green, *Keter*, 80–81. Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:15, 44c.

On the significance of Mother Israel's crowning God, see *Yefeh Qol* on *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Maharzu* on *Shemot Rabbah* 52:5. On the spelling of ולאומי (*u-l'ummi*) in the verse from Isaiah, see *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

61. **This issues from Supernal Mother...** *Shekhinah* emanates from *Binah*, who is symbolized by the second compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head. *Binah* is also symbolized by the second letter of the Name יהוה (*YHVH*): the feminine marker ה (*he*). From *Binah*, a breath issues to the nose of *Ze'eir Anpin*, pictured as a cabinet (or "armoire").

The word "armoire" renders פרדשקא (*pardashqa*), apparently based on the rabbinic term פרדסקין (*pardisqin*), a corruption of Greek *purgiskos*, "cupboard, cabinet." See M *Oholot* 6:7; *Tosefta Oholot* 7:13; Lieberman, *Tosefet Rishonim*, 3:115. On the word *pardisqin* in M *Oholot*, the early thirteenth-century Tosafist Samson of Sens explains to his readers what a cabinet is: "hollow columns in the wall of the house made of many windows and with doors." Asher ben Yehiel explains that *pardisqin* are "windows like towers built into the wall."

See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tum'at Met* 25:4; Abraham ben David, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:176b–177a (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*); 3:130b (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*), 294b (*IZ*).

Some commentators understand *pardashqa* as "officer," based on the rabbinic term פרדשכא (*pardashkha*), "officer, official," which may itself derive from Persian. This sense could convey the image of a nose supervising commandingly. See BT *Shabbat* 94a, *Megillah* 12b; *Zohar* 1:148b; 2:8b, 36b; 3:144b (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*); *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *pardakhsh*; *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, 336, s.v. *pardakhsh*.

62. **The Jubilee, in which slaves go free…** The Jubilee is celebrated every fifty years at the end of the cycle of seven Sabbatical years. Here, Rabbi Yehudah associates the Jubilee with (the brain of) *Binah*, who possesses fifty gates (see above, note 58). He includes another fifty, as well: the fifty days of the Omer. The repose of liberated slaves is suggested by the sound of pronouncing the letter ה (*he*), which resembles an exhalation of relief.

According to Exodus 21:2, Hebrew slaves are to be set free after six years (occasionally associated with the start of the Sabbatical year). Rabbinic sources, however, sometimes associate the Jubilee year with the freeing of slaves. This is based partly on Leviticus 25:10: *You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim* דרור (*deror*), *release* [or: *freedom*], *in the land for all of its inhabitants. A jubilee it shall be for you, and you shall go back each man to his holding, and each man to his clan you shall go back*.

Furthermore, according to Leviticus, an Israelite debtor forced to work for another Israelite (as well as an impoverished Israelite sold as a slave to a non-Israelite) goes free in the Jubilee. (See Leviticus 25:40, 54.) Moreover, according to Exodus 21:6, a slave who refuses to be set free in the seventh year *shall serve* [his master] *forever*; and this is interpreted midrashically as "until the

Jubilee." See Vol. 8, pp. 208–9, n. 6. On *Binah*, the Jubilee, and the Omer, see *Zohar* 2:46a, 83b; 3:136a (*IR*).

63. **The exodus from Egypt...** The biblical passage contained in this second compartment concludes: *Through strength of hand YHVH brought us out of Egypt* (Exodus 13:16).

This discussion of the first two compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head involves *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, symbolized by the first two letters of the Name יהוה (*YHVH*): י (*yod*) and ה (*he*). These two letters spell יה (*Yah*), which is itself a Divine Name and which includes, as it were, the remaining letters of *YHVH*, since *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* include all of the lower *sefirot*, symbolized by the last two letters of *YHVH*. Thus, the letters *yod* and *he* are "generality of the Holy Name." On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

64. **From the side of Father issues *Ḥesed*...** *Ḥesed* is situated on the right side of the sefirotic tree, beneath Father *Ḥokhmah*. *Gevurah* is situated on the left side, beneath Mother *Binah*. *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is in the middle, embracing right and left. He is symbolized by the third letter of the Name יהוה (*YHVH*): ו (*vav*).

65. **Third: *Hear, O Israel!*...** The third compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head contains the biblical passage beginning with this verse. (See above, note 52.)

In midrashic literature the title "Israel the Elder" refers to Israel the patriarch (Jacob), as opposed to the people Israel. In the *Zohar* "Israel the Elder" designates *Tif'eret*, also called *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). See above, p. 481, n. 601. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*.

66. ***You shall love YHVH your God...*** The verb ואהבת (*ve-ahavta*), *you shall love*, is associated with *Ḥesed* (Love), situated on the right side of the sefirotic tree beneath Father *Ḥokhmah*. *Ḥesed* is symbolized by Abraham, and this *sefirah* crowns Israel—namely *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel).

Tif'eret Yisra'el is also crowned on the left side, by *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac), situated beneath Mother *Binah*. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*.

67. **because one loves the King greatly…** A person who truly loves God manifests love toward all creatures. Abraham embodied selfless חסד (*ḥesed*), "kindness," so he attained that sefirotic rung. The third compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head—which contains the verse *You shall love YHVH your God*, etc.—fittingly corresponds to *Ḥesed*.

On the first sentence, see below at note 154. On the phrase "kindness of truth," see *Bereshit Rabbah* 96:6; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 5. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *You, Israel, My servant; Jacob, whom I have chosen; seed of Abraham*, אהבי (*ohavi*), *My friend* [or: *My lover*]. See *Zohar* 1:85a; *ZḤ* 52c.

68. **Fourth: *It shall be, if you heed…*** The fourth compartment of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head contains the biblical passage beginning with this verse. (See above, note 52.)

The wrath of YHVH is identified with *Gevurah*, also called *Din* (Judgment), situated on the left side and issuing from Mother *Binah*.

The context in Deuteronomy (11:13–17) reads: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands that I command you today, to love YHVH your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, I will give the rain of your land in its season, early rains and late, and you will gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. I will give grass in your field for your cattle, and you will eat and be sated. Take care, lest your heart be seduced, so that you turn aside and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the wrath of YHVH will flare against you, and He will shut the heavens so that there will be no rain and the earth will not*

yield her fruit, and you will perish quickly from the good land that YHVH is giving you.

69. **Now, you might say…** The beginning of this passage (quoted in the preceding note) does not express harsh Judgment, but rather love and blessing: *If you indeed heed My commands…. I will give the rain of your land in its season, early rains and late, and you will gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. I will give grass in your field for your cattle, and you will eat and be sated*.

Rabbi Shim'on explains that each sefirotic crown includes both good and evil, both Love and harsh Judgment. The biblical passage in this fourth compartment corresponds to *Gevurah*, and includes both positive and negative elements.

On the notion that each *sefirah* includes both good and evil, cf. *Zohar* 2:36a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 145–46, and Wolfson's n. 1 on p. 146.

70. **These four are grasped by ו (*vav*)…** These four passages and compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head (corresponding to *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*) are all grasped by *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*) in the name *YHVH. Tif'eret* is known as the blessed Holy One, who is described as putting on tefillin. (See the passage from BT *Berakhot* 6a, quoted above, note 52.)

The letter *vav* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) ascends to *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Understanding), and conveys the flow of emanation from above to below. *Tif'eret* is often pictured as the center, harmonizing right and left, spanning above and below.

On the correspondence between the sefirotic tetrad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah* and the four passages and compartments, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1162; 1170, n. 69.

71. ***Only your fathers did YHVH desire…*** The three patriarchs (*fathers*)—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—symbolize the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. This triad

forms a throne (or chariot) for the highest level of Divinity. Through these *sefirot* (and their associated patriarchs), God's power and love are manifested in the world.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6 (in the name of Resh Lakish): "The patriarchs themselves constitute the Chariot." See above, p. 211, n. 70.

On the verse in Deuteronomy, see *Zohar* 1:216b, 223b. The full verse reads: *Only your fathers did YHVH desire, to love them; and He chose their seed after them—you, from all the peoples, as on this day*.

72. **Just as there is a holy Chariot below…** There are angels below forming a Chariot for *Shekhinah*, and the triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* forming a Chariot for the highest level of Divinity (as mentioned above). Yet, the entire sefirotic realm constitutes a Chariot for *Ein Sof*.

73. **yet a chariot is four…** Only with four legs does the Chariot-Throne becomes stable. So the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* must be completed by a fourth component: *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by King David, the *seed* of the patriarchs. The sefirotic triad forms the divine body, which is then perfected by *Shekhinah*. On David's role along with the patriarchs, see above, p. 211, n. 70; Vol. 8, p. 436, n. 409.

74. ***He was ruddy, with fine eyes…*** The color red signifies Judgment, which also characterizes *Shekhinah*, David's "allotted share." Yet this Judgment is balanced by Compassion, which is indicated by the phrase about *love for David*.

On the verse in Isaiah, see above, p. 507, n. 20. The verse in Samuel reads: *He was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on*. See above, note 45.

75. **We have established *the acts of love for David…*** Elsewhere in the *Zohar* this phrase alludes specifically to *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, who are *faithful acts of love for Shekhinah* (symbolized by *David*). See above, p. 507, n. 20.

Rabbi Yitsḥak agrees that *ruddy* refers to Judgment. He adds that *with fine eyes* alludes to David's joining *with* the patriarchs to complete the Chariot-Throne.

76. **Jerusalem and Zion—Judgment and Compassion…** Jerusalem symbolizes *Shekhinah* (who is influenced by Judgment); Zion symbolizes *Yesod* (who conveys Compassion). Nevertheless, *Shekhinah* also includes Compassion (and is ideally united with *Yesod*), so Jerusalem (or *the City of David*) is identified with *Zion*.

According to rabbinic tradition, God participates in Israel's exile. Thus the verse in Hosea is understood to mean that until Israel returns to Jerusalem, and God (*the Holy One*) is present once again with them there (*in your midst*), He *will not enter* heavenly Jerusalem (*the city*). Here, heavenly Jerusalem symbolizes *Shekhinah*, with whom the blessed Holy One will reunite fully only when Israel returns from exile.

On Jerusalem and Zion, see *Zohar* 1:186a; 3:31a, 65b–66a, 137a–b (*IR*), 293b (*IZ*), 296b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 368. On the verse in Hosea, see BT *Ta'anit* 5a (in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan), and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *lo avo* and *Yerushalayim*; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 122:4; *Zohar* 1:1b, 231a; 2:224b; 3:15b, 68b, 147b–148a. Cf. Revelation 21:2; *Targum Yonatan*, Psalms 122:3.

77. **ש (*Shin*), inscribed with three knots…** On the outside of the leather box of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, it is customary to mark a (normal) three-pronged ש (*shin*) on the right side (from the perspective of the person wearing the *tefillah*) and a four-pronged ש (*shin*) on the left side.

According to Rabbi Yitsḥak, the three prongs allude to the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, while the fourth prong alludes to *Shekhinah*, who completes the fourfold Chariot. From the sefirotic arrangement, lower powers branch out, proceeding, as it were, along the two leather straps of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head.

On the three-pronged and four-pronged *shins*, see *Tosafot, Menaḥot* 35a, s.v. *shin*; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefillin* 3:2; *Zohar* 1:129b (*MhN*); 3:228b (*RM*), 254a–b (*RM*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 239–40, and Wolfson's n. 7 on p. 239; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 32:42; idem, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 32:42. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Ateret Tsevi*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

78. ו **(*Vav*) grasps those upper ones...** *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*) in the name *YHVH*, grasps the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head (corresponding to *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*). *Tif'eret* is known as the blessed Holy One, who is described (in BT *Berakhot* 6a) as putting on tefillin. See above, notes 52, 70.

By putting on tefillin, a person is glorified. Furthermore, he displays the Name *YHVH*, whose four letters correspond to the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head. See the continuation of the passage in *Berakhot* (quoted in the following note): "How do we know that tefillin are a strength to Israel?..."

On tefillin as פאר (*pe'er*), "glory," see JT *Mo'ed Qatan* 3:5, 82d; BT *Berakhot* 11a, 16b; *Sukkah* 25b; *Mo'ed Qatan* 15a, all of which quote Ezekiel 24:17: פארך (*Phe'erekha*), *Your turban* [interpreted as *Your glory*], *put on*.

79. **The tefillin of the arm are the left...** The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the arm (or hand) is worn on the left arm (and hand), which are known as עוז (*oz*), *strength*. See BT *Berakhot* 6a (quoted above, note 52): "How do we know that the blessed Holy One puts on tefillin? For it is said: *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of* עזו (*uzzo*), *His strength* (Isaiah 62:8). *By His right hand*—this is Torah, as is said: *From His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). *And by the arm of uzzo, His strength*—this is tefillin, as is said: *YHVH will give* עז (*oz*), *strength, unto His people* (Psalms 29:11). How do we know that tefillin are a strength to Israel? For it is written: *All the peoples of the*

earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you (Deuteronomy 28:10), and it has been taught: Rabbi Eli'ezer the Great says, 'This refers to the tefillin of the head.'"

Here Rabbi Yitsḥak associates *oz* (*strength*) with *Shekhinah*, who is influenced by (or "inherits from") *Gevurah* (Power), or *oz* (*strength*), on the left. Because of Her close connection with *Gevurah*, She is identified with that side and symbolized by the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the left arm (or hand).

The full verse in Exodus reads: *It shall be a sign on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand, and frontlets between your eyes, that through strength of hand YHVH brought us out of Egypt*. Traditionally, this verse is interpreted as referring to tefillin, both the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand and of the head. The unusual spelling of ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, with a superfluous ה (*he*)—rather than ידך (*yadekha*)—is understood (in BT *Menaḥot* 37a) as implying יד כהה (*yad kehah*), "weak hand," designating where the *tefillah* should be strapped: on the left hand of those who are right-handed, or the right hand of those who are left-handed. Here, Rabbi Yitsḥak understands the extra *he* as alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is signified by the final *he* of יהוה (*YHVH*).

80. **So the last ה (*he*) grasps the tefillin…** *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the last letter of the name *YHVH*, grasps the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the left hand.

As mentioned above (note 52), in the *tefillah* of the hand all four biblical passages are written on one piece of parchment. These passages symbolize the four *sefirot Tif'eret, Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*, which together represent the male divine body, conveying the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah* and uniting with Her.

81. ***You will see My back…*** In the context in Exodus, Moses asks to see the Divine Glory, but he is not allowed to see God's face, only His back. According to BT *Berakhot* 7a (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid), the wording *You*

will see My back "teaches us that the blessed Holy One showed Moses the knot of tefillin [at the back of God's head]."

Since this Talmudic passage associates *My back* with the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, and *Shekhinah* is sometimes pictured as the *back* of *Ze'eir Anpin*, Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders how *Shekhinah* can be symbolized by the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand, rather than of the head.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *I will take away My palm and you will see My back, but My face will not be seen*. On the passage in *Berakhot*, see above, p. 586, n. 256.

82. **from this, one strap hangs down…** Rabbi Yitsḥak explains how the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand symbolizes *Shekhinah* fittingly. The single strap hanging from this *tefillah* demonstrates how angels and creatures are suspended from *Shekhinah* and nourished by Her.

Shekhinah is known as זאת (*zot*), *this*, perhaps because as the Divine Presence She is constantly right here. She is also called *sign*, both *sign of the covenant* and *a sign on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*—the latter referring to the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand. On the significance of the extra letter ה (*he*) in ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, see above, note 79. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7.

83. **שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear, O Israel!*…** The full verse reads: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*. "Israel the Elder" designates *Tif'eret*, also called *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). See above, note 65. On this passage, see Scholem; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 143–45.

84. **A large ע (*ayin*)…** In the Masoretic text, the letter ע (*ayin*) in the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, is written large. Similarly, the letter ד (*dalet*) in the final word of the verse—אחד (*eḥad*), *one*—is written large. Together these two letters spell עד (*ed*), "witness," which is often understood as alluding to the fact that by reciting this first line of the *Shema*

one witnesses and testifies to the oneness of God. See above, p. 584, n. 253.

The letters of the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, can be grouped into two units: ש מ (*shin, mem*)—equivalent to שם (*shem*), "name"—and ע (*ayin*), which is numerically equivalent to seventy. This formation of the letters alludes to seventy divine names. See above, p. 585, n. 255.

85. ***Hear, O heavens...*** Just as Israel is called to offer testimony to God's oneness, so the *heavens* are called to witness God's proclamation. Furthermore, just as *Israel* alludes to *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (see above, note 83), so does the word *heavens*.

86. ***YHVH*—head of all...** Alluding to Father *Ḥokhmah*, the beginning of the sefirotic body, radiating from *Keter* (who is known as the Holy Ancient One).

87. **אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *Our God*...** Alluding to *Binah*, source of all the lower *sefirot*.

88. ***YHVH*—crown of the Tree...** Namely, *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*), who is rooted in the highest sefirotic realm.

89. ***One*—Assembly of Israel...** Namely, *Shekhinah*, who "assembles" or gathers the entire flow of emanation. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

90. **The holy supernal Chariot...** *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*) in the name *YHVH*, puts on the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, whose four compartments correspond to *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*. *Tif'eret* is known as the blessed Holy One, who is described (in BT *Berakhot* 6a) as putting on tefillin. (See above, notes 52, 70, 78.) The sefirotic tetrad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah* can be pictured as a chariot-throne for *Keter*.

Shekhinah, symbolized by the last letter of the name *YHVH*, puts on the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand, whose four biblical passages are included in one parchment and correspond to *Tif'eret, Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*. (See above, note

80.) This sefirotic tetrad can be pictured as a chariot-throne for *Binah*.

91. **[265a]** The *Zohar* passages from near the top of 263a to the top of 264a are from *Piqqudin*, which will be translated in Vol. 12. The passage from the top of 264a to the middle of 264b appears also in 2:161b–162a; see Vol. 5, pp. 431–36; p. 432, end of n. 682. The passage from the middle to the bottom of 264b appears also in 2:139b; see Vol. 5, pp. 282–85; p. 283, end of n. 258.

92. **the tefillin of the Master of the Universe…** Namely, the tradition that God Himself puts on tefillin and their sefirotic significance. Rabbi Abba accepts this, but he wonders what biblical basis there is for the holiness of the leather compartments and straps of the tefillin.

On the notion that God wears tefillin, see above, note 52. On the traditional basis of the leather compartments and straps of the tefillin, see BT *Shabbat* 28b (and parallels).

93. ***YHVH Elohim made coats of skin…*** The double divine name *YHVH Elohim* alludes to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. The reference to עור (*or*), *skin* [or: *leather*] alludes to the leather compartments and straps of the tefillin. *Adam and his wife* represent *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, the former putting on (or associated with) the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head; the latter, the *tefillah* of the hand. See above, note 90.

The superfluous ה (*he*) at the end of the word ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is signified by the final *he* of יהוה (*YHVH*). See above, note 79. On Rav Hamnuna, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

94. **That left arm of the blessed Holy One…** Whereas Rabbi Shim'on just indicated that the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the (left) hand (or arm) is associated with *Shekhinah*, "there are some who" associate this *tefillah* with *Gevurah*, the divine left arm. Although this seems fitting, Rabbi Shim'on objects, since that would eliminate *Gevurah* from its association with one of the four compartments in

the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, along with *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Ḥesed*. (See above, note 70. Cf. below, note 202.)

Rather, "there are two holy Chariots," each corresponding to one *tefillah* (phylactery). The sefirotic tetrad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah* corresponds to the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head (worn by *Tif'eret*), and this tetrad constitutes a chariot-throne for *Keter*. The lower sefirotic tetrad of *Tif'eret, Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod* corresponds to the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand, and this tetrad constitutes a chariot-throne for *Binah*. (See above, note 90.)

The box of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand (or arm) is strapped on the upper arm, near the heart, which symbolizes *Shekhinah*. The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head is close to the brain, symbolizing *Ze'eir Anpin* (whose core is *Tif'eret*). On the concluding sentence, see above, notes 79 (end), 82.

95. **When a person rises early in the morning…** As he leaves his home to go to synagogue, four angels escort him. The proclamation "Give honor to the image of the Holy King!" alludes to the idea that the human being is created in God's image. Here it may also allude to the tradition that God Himself puts on tefillin. See above, note 52. The phrase "son of the King" may refer to the idea that the Jewish soul is engendered by the union of King *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

According to a rabbinic tradition, two angels accompany a person every day. See BT *Ta'anit* 11a and *Ḥagigah* 16a, based on Psalms 91:11: *For His messengers* [or: *angels*] *He will command for you to guard you on all your ways*. See Vol. 7, p. 331, n. 1.

Traditionally, a person first wraps himself in the tallit ("a wrap of *mitsvah*") and then puts on tefillin, although the sequence here could imply the reverse. See *Zohar* 3:81a, 120b, 175b; *ZḤ* 41d; *Or Yaqar*; Ḥayyim Yosef David Azulai, *Birkei Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 25:4; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 45–46.

The phrase “tefillin with the holy insignia on his arm” may refer to the fact that the knot formed by the strap passed through this *tefillah* (phylactery) is shaped like the letter י (*yod*), the first letter of *YHVH*. The description of the mezuzah as “inscription of the Holy Name” probably refers to the name *Shaddai*, traditionally inscribed on the back of the mezuzah’s parchment.

The verb “escort” renders אוזפי (*ozefei*), which in normal Aramaic means “lend”; but the Hebrew verb להלוות (*lehalvot*), “to lend,” is a homonym of *lehalvot*, “to escort,” and the *Zohar* —either playfully or mistakenly—employs the Aramaic verb לאוזפא (*le’ozafa*) in this sense. Cf. the English idiom “to lend an escort.”

On this passage, see [Moses de León?], *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, par. 15. On the proclamation “Give honor to the image…,” see also *Devarim Rabbah* 4:4; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 19; *Midrash Tehillim* 17:8; 55:9; Vol. 5, p. 120, n. 342.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory*. On tefillin as פאר (*pe’er*), “glory,” see above, note 78.

96. **all the members of His palace…** Those who are truly devoted.

Rabbi Shim’on interprets חושבי (*ḥoshevei*), *those who contemplate*, based on another sense of the root חשב (*ḥshv*): “to design.”

In the Masoretic text of Malachi, the wording is ספר זכרון ויכתב (*va-yikkatev sefer zikkaron*), *and a book of remembrance was written, before Him*. However, the Kaufmann manuscript of the Mishnah reads (in M *Avot* 3:2, 6): ויכתב בספר זכרון (*va-yikkatev be-sefer zikkaron*), *and it was written in a book of remembrance, before Him*. This same reading is preserved here in numerous *Zohar* manuscripts, as well as the Mantua and Cremona editions.

See *Ester Rabbah* 6:14; *Rut Rabbah* 4:5; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse; Vol. 7, p. 387, n. 91. The full verse in Malachi reads: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another;*

and YHVH listened attentively, and a book of remembrance was written before Him concerning those who revere YHVH and contemplate His name.

On the thread of blue in the tzitzit, see above, pp. 71–72, n. 53. The full verse in Exodus 29 reads: *You shall take the garments and clothe Aaron in the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece, and you shall gird him* בחשב (*be-ḥeshev*), *with the designed band of, the ephod*. On the term *ḥeshev*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:505. The verse in Exodus 35 describes how God has endowed Bezalel and his chief assistant, Oholiab, with skill and wisdom to fashion the various elements of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle).

97. **glories in him…** In one who leaves his home on the way to synagogue enwrapped in a tallit and adorned in tefillin.

98. **But as for one…** A person who comes to synagogue "unadorned" fails to demonstrate awe.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *As for me, through Your great kindness I enter Your house, I bow at Your holy temple in awe of You*. According to a Spanish custom, this verse is recited upon entering the synagogue. See *Kolbo*, 87; David Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham*, 349; *Zohar* 1:11a; 3:8b.

99. **who said here אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God*…** In the verse *Hear, O Israel! YHVH* אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God, YHVH is one*. Moses attained the rung of *Tif'eret* and was thereby linked to the realm of *Binah*, who is known as אלהים (*Elohim*). Other prophets attained the rungs of *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. In this verse, Moses bound himself together with all of Israel. See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 74.

100. **there is not a single word in Torah…** On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13.

101. ***Moses would speak…*** See BT *Berakhot* 45a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi: "How do we know that the one who translates [the public Torah reading into

Aramaic] is not permitted to raise his voice above that of the reader? As is said: *Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice*. The phrase *with a voice* need not have been stated. What then does *with a voice* come to teach? With the voice of Moses [i.e., not louder than that of Moses].” Just as God did not overwhelm Israel with a voice mightier than that of Moses, so the translator should not raise his voice above that of the Torah reader.

Here Rabbi Shim’on understands “the voice of Moses” as referring to *Tif’eret*, the divine voice and rung attained by Moses. God responded to Moses, or confirmed what he said, with the power of this sefirotic voice.

In the verse in Deuteronomy, Moses told Israel, *You shall love YHVH* אלהיך (*Elohekha*), *your God*. According to Rabbi Shim’on, Moses was referring to *Shekhinah*—to whom the name אלהים (*Elohim*) can also apply—who dwelled among the people. See *Zohar* 1:51a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 74; Baḥya ben Asher on Deuteronomy 6:4.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 25; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9; *Midrash Tehillim* 18:29; 24:11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:3; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 19:19; *Zohar* 3:7a.

102. **The curses in Leviticus…** See BT *Megillah* 31b, where Abbaye distinguishes between the list of curses in Leviticus 26 and the later list in Deuteronomy 28: “The former [curses] are stated in the plural [i.e., addressed to all Israel] and Moses uttered them מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), from the mouth of [Divine] Power [i.e., conveying God’s speech]; the latter are stated in the singular and Moses uttered them מפי עצמו (*mi-pi atsmo*), from his own mouth [i.e., in his own formulation and in his own name].” For example, the list in Leviticus reads: *If you* [plural] *do not heed Me* (Leviticus 26:14), conveying divine speech, whereas the list in Deuteronomy reads: *It shall be, if you* [singular] *do not heed the voice of YHVH your God*… (Deuteronomy 28:15).

Rabbi Shim'on wonders how one could ever imagine that Moses uttered even one letter of the Torah on his own and not conveyed from God. On the passage in *Megillah*, see above, note 31.

103. **However, it is fine…** The Talmudic expression "from his own mouth" does not mean "from himself," but rather "from (or with, by) the mouth of the voice of *Tif'eret*," to which Moses was intimately linked (and which is called *voice*). The phrase *mi-pi ha-gevurah* (from the mouth of [Divine] Power) refers either to another *sefirah*—apparently *Shekhinah* (who is known as lower *Gevurah*), or perhaps *Gevurah* (Power) or *Binah* (the source of *Gevurah*).

See *Zohar* 3:7a; above, notes 31–32. On the distinction between אלהיך (*Elohekha*), *your God*, and אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God*, see above, notes 99, 101.

104. **in that place of the throne is attached a mezuzah…** Providing protection from harsh powers threatening souls of the departed. The throne often symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

105. **should not step over water that has been poured…** Such filthy water is dangerous and can empower the demon who dwells right outside the door. See *Zohar* 3:263b–264a (*Piq*). Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 111a; *Zohar* 1:184b.

106. **poured out contemptuously…** One should beware of demonic forces and not act contemptuously toward them.

107. **The entire Torah is a Holy Name…** On Torah as God's Name, see above, p. 26, n. 66.

108. **A person should inscribe…** The mezuzah contains two portions from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21), and as mentioned above, the entire Torah constitutes God's name. Alternatively, "the Holy Name" refers to the name *Shaddai*, inscribed on the back of the mezuzah's parchment.

The context in Psalms (91:10–11, 14) reads: *No evil will befall you, nor affliction draw near your tent. For His angels*

He will command for you, to guard you on all your ways.... Because he desires Me, I will deliver him. I will raise him high, for he knows My name.

109. **The place of the entrance of the house...** Rabbi El'azar is apparently playing with two senses of the word מזוזה (*mezuzah*): its original sense (doorpost) and its later meaning (mezuzah). Just as an earthly house has a mezuzah, so does the Divine House, whose entrance is *Shekhinah*. From the heavenly mezuzah, harsh forces of Judgment flee. Cf. above at note 104.

The phrase "the Holy Name inscribed with its letters" likely refers to the name *Shaddai*, inscribed on the back of the mezuzah's parchment. Cf. the preceding note.

110. **From where is the master of light coming?…** Apparently, Rabbi Yitsḥak wonders why Rabbi Abba would need to seek out anyone else, when Rabbi Abba himself is a "master of light" and cleaves every day to *Shekhinah*. She is pictured as "consuming fire," based on Deuteronomy 4:24: *YHVH your God is a consuming fire*. See *Sullam*.

The description "who cleaves to consuming fire" derives from rabbinic sources regarding *Shekhinah*. See BT *Ketubbot* 111b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "*You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today* (Deuteronomy 4:4). Now, is it possible to cleave to *Shekhinah*? Look at what is written: *YHVH your God is a consuming fire* (ibid., 24)! Rather, whoever marries his daughter to a disciple of the wise, conducts business on their behalf, or benefits them from his assets is regarded by Scripture as if he cleaves to *Shekhinah*."

In BT *Sotah* 14a Rabbi Hama son of Ḥanina explains that one can approach and withstand the consuming fire of *Shekhinah* by imitating divine actions, e.g., by clothing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting mourners and burying the dead.

A mystical response is offered by Joseph Gikatilla (in *Sha'arei Orah*, 83b): "As to what the rabbis have said: 'Now, is it possible for a human to cleave to *Shekhinah*?'—it certainly is!"

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 22:1; *Tanḥuma, Mattot* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mattot* 1; *Zohar* 1:50b–51a; Heschel, *Torah min ha-Shamayim*, 1:153–55. The full verse in Daniel reads: *He reveals the deep and the hidden; He knows what is in darkness, and light dwells with Him*.

111. **A person is obligated to greet *Shekhinah*…** Rabbi Abba explains that one must regularly greet *Shekhinah*, who is embodied in his teacher. And the greatest teacher is Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai, known as the Supernal Lamp.

See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: "A person is obligated to greet [or: visit; pay respects to] his teacher on a festival, as is said: *Why are you going to him* [namely the prophet Elisha] *today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath* (2 Kings 4:23)—which implies that on new moon and Sabbath one should go."

On the association between greeting one's teacher and greeting *Shekhinah*, see JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b, in the name of Rabbi Zeira: "Whoever greets his teacher is considered as if he greets *Shekhinah*." See above, p. 426, n. 425.

On the passage in BT *Rosh ha-Shanah*, see BT *Sukkah* 27b; *Zohar* 1:127a–b (*MhN*). On Rabbi Shim'on's title, cf. above, p. 27, n. 68.

112. **Let me return with you…** This may mean "Let me return home with you" and hear from you some of Rabbi Shim'on's wisdom. The phrase "and greet *Shekhinah*" could refer to encountering Rabbi Shim'on indirectly via Rabbi Abba, or to encountering Rabbi Abba. See JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b (the continuation of the passage quoted in the preceding note), in the name of Rabbi Yishma'el: "One who greets his friend is considered as if he greets *Shekhinah*."

Alternatively, "Let me return with you" means "… to greet Rabbi Shim'on," thereby greeting *Shekhinah*. For various interpretations, see *Miqdash Melekh*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

113. **The author of this song is not mentioned…** Unlike many psalms, which include the supposed author (usually David) in their title. Rabbi Abba explains that anonymous psalms such as this one were uttered by *Shekhinah* (identified with the Holy Spirit), who participates in Israel's exile.

114. היושבי **(*Ha-yoshevi*), *O dweller…*** Rabbi Abba wonders why this word is spelled with an apparently superfluous י (*yod*) at the end, rather than according to its normal form: היושב (*ha-yoshev*). Technically, this extra *yod* is an ornamental device of poetic style, but Rabbi Abba seeks a

deeper meaning. He explains that the point-like ’ (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, known as “depth of all.” In prayer, one should call forth blessings from this ultimate depth, to be poured out to *Tif’eret* (symbolized by *heaven*).

For Rabbi Abba, *the depths* mentioned in Psalms 130 do not refer primarily to the depths of the human heart or the depths of despair, but rather to cosmic depths, from which one should seek to draw forth the divine stream: *From the depths* [in which You are] *I call You* [forth].

See *Zohar* 2:63a–b; 3:26a, 70a, 107a; Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 37b–38a; idem, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 219. For the rabbinic application of the verse in Psalms 130 to prayer, see *Tosefta Berakhot* 3:17; JT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4d; BT *Berakhot* 10b. On the significance of the apparently superfluous *yod* in *ha-yoshevi*, see *Zohar* 1:229a.

115. ***Like the eyes of slaves…*** In this next verse of Psalms 123, *slaves* refers to the heavenly princes of the nations of the world, who are subservient to higher forces. They are nourished merely from the residue of the sefirotic Tree. In the concluding sentence, “they” refers to the heavenly princes, or to their nations, or to both.

On the heavenly princes of the nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Look, like the eyes of slaves* [or: *servants*] *to the hand of their masters, like the eyes of a slave-girl* [or: *handmaiden*] *to the hand of her mistress, so are our eyes to YHVH our God until He grants us grace*.

116. ***Like the eyes of a slave-girl…*** Referring to Lilith, the demonic female whose mistress is *Shekhinah*. Lilith’s power was destroyed by God in Egypt when He slew all the firstborn, *from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the slave-girl who is behind the millstones* (Exodus 11:5).

Lilith is nourished from the drippings of *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the land of Israel). See BT *Ta’anit* 10a: “The

land of Israel drinks water directly from the rain, whereas the rest of the world drinks מתמצית (*mi-tamtsit*), of the drippings [Munich MS: of the land of Israel]." The manuscript reading is reflected here in the *Zohar*: "*Mi-tamtsit*, from the drippings, of this land of Israel." The word תמצית (*tamtsit*) means literally "that which is squeezed out," thus: "drippings, juice, residue, remnant, leftovers." See above, p. 469, n. 564.

The context in Proverbs reads: *At three things the earth trembles, and four it cannot bear: at a slave who becomes a king and a scoundrel who is sated with food, at a loathsome woman in the marriage bed and a slave-girl who dispossesses her mistress*. The concluding clause alludes in the *Zohar* to the catastrophic situation in which demonic forces are so empowered that Lilith supplants *Shekhinah*, causing the latter (symbolized by *the earth*) to tremble.

On Lilith, see Vol. 7, p. 117, n. 357. On Lilith as a slave-girl supplanting *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:122a–b, 131b, 190b, 204a; 2:60b–61a, 96a–b, 117b–118b (*RM*); 3:69a, 279b (*RM*); *TZ*, intro, 2a, all of which quote the passage in Proverbs. See also *Zohar* 2:114b (*RM*); Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 120–22. Cf. *Zohar* 3:37b, 72a. On *the slave-girl who is behind the millstones*, see *Zohar* 1:48a, 118a, 177a, 223b; 2:28a, 37b, 56b, 80a, 191b; 3:69a.

117. ***At a slave who becomes a king…*** Alluding to the heavenly princes of the nations when they dominate Israel. See above, note 115.

In the verse from Exodus, *slaves* now refers to such princes (especially the one ruling over Egypt). The full verse reads: *I am YHVH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of slaves*. For the context in Proverbs, see the preceding note.

118. ***And a slave-girl who dispossesses her mistress…*** Alluding to Lilith supplanting *Shekhinah*. See above, note 116.

119. **From the side of this *slave-girl*…** From Lilith issue many demonic forces.

See the explanation of the mezuzah attributed to Onkelos son of Kalonymus in BT *Avodah Zarah* 11a: "According to universal custom, a king of flesh-and-blood dwells inside, and his servants guard him from outside. But as for the blessed Holy One, His servants are inside, and He guards them from outside, as is said: *YHVH will guard your going out and your coming in, now and forever* (Psalms 121:8)." See BT *Menaḥot* 33b; *ZḤ* 84d (*MhN, Rut*).

The phrase "dazzling demonic guards" renders טהירין גרדיני (*gardinei tehirin*). The first word is based on the Castilian *guardián*, "guardian." See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246–48. As for טהירין (*tehirin*), it derives from the Aramaic root meaning "brightness, noon." One class of demons is named טהרי (*tiharei*), "noonday demons." See above, p. 507, n. 17.

120. **When those evil species approach…** They see the name שדי (*Shaddai*), inscribed on the back of the mezuzah's parchment.

See *ZḤ* 84d (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *Mar'ot ha-Ẓove'ot*, 70, who plays on the terms שד (*shed*), "demon," and שדי (*Shaddai*),

121. **Why the whole passage?** The first two paragraphs of the *Shema*, contained in the mezuzah: Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21.

122. **It is fine…** The name *Shaddai* is adorned by all the letters in these two biblical paragraphs.

123. **והיה (*Ve-hayah*), *It shall be*…** The second of the two biblical paragraphs begins: והיה (*Ve-hayah*), *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands*…. The word והיה (*ve-hayah*) is an anagram of the Name יהוה (*YHVH*) "from below to above," that is, beginning with the last two letters of יהוה (*YHVH*) and concluding with its first two letters. Fittingly, the name *Shaddai* is inscribed on the back of the mezuzah's parchment, opposite the word (and name) והיה (*ve-hayah*).

On the placement of the name *Shaddai*, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefillin u-Mzuzah ve-Sefer Torah* 5:4; *TZ* 22, 66a; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur, Yoreh De'ah* 288; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef, Yoreh De'ah* 288:15; idem, *Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah* 288:15.

124. ***This is the gate of YHVH...*** The full verse reads: *This is the gate* ליהוה (*la-YHVH*), *of YHVH* [or: *to YHVH*]; *the righteous will enter it*.

125. **marked in their bodies...** With the sign of circumcision. Similarly, their clothes are marked by tzitzit, and their heads and hands by tefillin. The phrase "a shoe of *mitsvah*" refers to the *mitsvah* of *ḥalitsah*, "pulling off (the shoe)." See above, pp. 189–90, n. 10.

The phrase "sowing and reaping" refers to *mitsvot* pertaining to these agricultural activities, namely *kil'ayim* (the prohibition against sowing "two kinds" of seeds together), and *leqet, shikhḥah*, and *pe'ah*, three parts of the harvest that the farmer is instructed to leave for the poor. *Leqet* (gleaning) refers to stalks dropped by harvesters, which may not be retrieved. *Shikhḥah* (a forgotten thing) refers to sheaves overlooked during reaping, which may not be retrieved. *Pe'ah* (corner) refers to corners of the field, which should not be reaped but left for the poor. The phrase "marked in their homes" refers to the mezuzah.

126. **אותי (*oti*), *Me, they have forsaken...*** Rabbi Abba construes אותי (*oti*), *Me*, according to its homonym: *My sign*—namely the covenantal sign of circumcision. Thus a Jew who has sexual relations with a Gentile woman—inserting the holy insignia "into an alien domain"—forsakes and betrays *My sign*. Other nations are *broken cisterns*, whereas Israel resembles *Shekhinah*, who is a *fountain, a well*, and *a spring*.

See above, p. 502, n. 6. The Aramaic word את (*at*) is equivalent to Hebrew אות (*ot*), "sign." The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *For My people have committed two wrongs: Me they have forsaken—Fountain of living waters—to hew out their own cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold*

no water. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from the midst of your well*. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *A spring of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon*.

127. ***That can hold no water…*** The flowing river of emanation eventually reaches the Garden of *Shekhinah*, and *from there it divides*, nourishing the worlds below. However, the forces of the demonic Left Side are not watered from that flow; they *can hold no water*.

For the full verse in Jeremiah, see the preceding note. The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. See above, p. 201, n. 45.

128. **One who betrays the Holy Name…** By having sexual relations with a Gentile. Such a person clings to the demonic side. Conversely, one who guards the covenantal sign of circumcision by maintaining sexual purity is watered by the stream of emanation both here on earth and in the afterlife. Furthermore, he stimulates the flow from above to fill the Well of *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail*. See above, p. 121, n. 206.

129. **he betrays the supernal Name…** The mark of the covenant of circumcision is identified with the letter י (*yod*), which is the initial letter of יהוה (*YHVH*). See above, p. 520, n. 56.

By betraying the covenantal sign, a Jewish man interrupts the flow from above to the Well of *Shekhinah*. The context in Deuteronomy concerns a case in which a husband accuses his new wife of not being a virgin. Deuteronomy 22:16–19 describes what happens if the charge is untrue: *The young woman's father and mother shall take and bring out to the elders of the town at the*

gate the signs of the young woman's virginity [namely a bloodied bedsheet or garment]. *The young woman's father shall say to the elders, "My daughter I gave to this man as wife, and he hated her. And look, he has brought an accusation of misconduct, saying, 'I found no signs of virginity for your daughter,' but these are the signs of my daughter's virginity." And they shall spread out the garment before the elders of the town; and the elders of that town shall take the man out and discipline him, and they shall fine him a hundredweight of silver and give it to the young woman's father, for he has defamed a virgin of Israel*.

Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the phrase *a virgin of Israel* is "unspecified," that is, it refers not only to the wronged wife but also to *Shekhinah*, the virgin bride of *Tif'eret Yisra'el*. A husband who falsely accuses his wife of not being a virgin defames not only her but also the Divine Virgin. Similarly, a Jew who chooses a Gentile woman over a Jewish woman defames not only his potential Jewish partner—*a virgin of Israel*—but also Virgin *Shekhinah*.

The phrase "false accusations" renders תסקופי מלין (*tasquppei millin*), which appears in *Targum Onqelos* on the passage in Deuteronomy (22:14, 17), translating עלילת דברים (*alilot devarim*), *accusation of misconduct*. See above, p. 140, n. 265.

On *Shekhinah* as Virgin Israel, and the relation between *Shekhinah* and the Virgin Mary, see Vol. 8, p. 62, n. 26. On the passage in Deuteronomy, see *Zohar* 3:89b–90a.

130. **A virgin inherits seven blessings…** Traditionally, seven blessings are recited at the wedding ceremony. According to Rabbi Yose, this number corresponds to the seven flows of emanation received by *Shekhinah* (Virgin of Israel), issuing from *Binah*. Consequently, *Shekhinah* is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), "Bathsheba," which means literally "Daughter of Seven." See Vol. 7, pp. 20–21, n. 61; above, p. 35, n. 93; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 216.

131. **Another woman…** That is, what about a widow or a divorcée? Since she is not a virgin, and thus does not resemble Virgin *Shekhinah*, what is the source of her blessing? The answer is that she is bestowed with the blessing that was offered to Ruth (the widow of Mahlon) when she married Boaz. However, such a bride does not receive seven blessings, which reflect the mystery of Virgin *Shekhinah*.

The distinction made here between the number of blessings offered to a bride, depending on whether she is a virgin or not, reflects a medieval Franco-Ashkenazic custom adopted by the *Zohar*. See *ZḤ* 88d–89a (*MhN, Rut*); *Sha'arei Teshuvah (Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim)*, 344; Solomon ben Abraham Adret, *She'elot u-Tshuvot* 1:216, 1175; 7:190; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 32–33.

The full verse in Ruth records the declaration made to Boaz when he married Ruth: *All the people at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May YHVH make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem!"*

132. **Here is clarity for words of Torah!…** The word "clarity" renders צחותא (*tsaḥuta*), which in Aramaic means "thirst" but here apparently conveys the sense of Hebrew צחות (*tsaḥut*), "clarity."

See BT *Eruvin* 65a: "Legal discussion requires צילותא (*tsiluta*), clarity, like a day of the north wind." Cf. above, p. 456, n. 524; p. 549, n. 147.

133. ***On that day, a great shofar will be blown…*** The wording *that day* refers to the day of Messianic deliverance.

See *Zohar* 2:19b (*MhN*). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *On that day, a great shofar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and bow down to YHVH on the holy mountain in Jerusalem*.

134. ***On that day, when Gog comes…*** The full verse reads: *On that day, when Gog comes to the soil of Israel—declares the Lord God—My rage shall flare up*. In this apocalyptic chapter of Ezekiel, the threatening figure of Gog leads a savage horde of nations from the north against Israel, but they are defeated by God.

135. **that supernal shofar…** Namely, *Binah*, who proclaims and conveys liberation. She is also identified with the Jubilee.

On *Binah* as the shofar of liberation, see *Zohar* 2:46b; 3:6b, 92b. On *Binah* as Jubilee (and on the association of Jubilee with the liberation of slaves), see above, note 62.

136. ***And* האובדים (*ha-ovedim*), *those who lose…*** The simple sense of the verse is: *On that day, a great shofar will be blown, and* האובדים (*ha-ovedim*), *those who were lost, in the land of Assyria… will come and bow down to YHVH*. But Rabbi Abba reads *ha-ovedim* as a transitive participle: *those who lose*—implying that those in exile "lose" faith and all its blessings.

See BT *Ketubbot* 110b: "Whoever lives in the land of Israel is like one who has a God; whoever lives outside the land of Israel is like one who has no God." See Vol. 4, p. 432, n. 235. For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, note 133.

137. **Righteous One and Assembly of Israel…** Namely, the divine couple *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*. In times of exile, they *lose* one another, since *Shekhinah* accompanies Her people in exile and is separated from Her partner, *Yesod*.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *Why* אבדה הארץ (*avedah ha-arets*), *has the land been ruined* [or: *been lost*]*?* Here, Rabbi Abba construes this as *Why has the land* [namely *Shekhinah*] *lost* [Her partner]? See *Zohar* 3:16b, 268a.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

138. ***The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *loses…*** The simple sense of this verse is: *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *perishes*

[or: *is lost*], but Rabbi Abba construes this as *The righteous one* [namely *Yesod*] *loses* [His partner, *Shekhinah*]. See above, p. 510, n. 26.

139. **from where do these *who lose* come?...** If *those who lose* refers to *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, what does the verse mean by saying that they *will come*? From where will they come?

Rabbi Abba explains that *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) will come back from exile, and *Yesod* will return from having ascended above and will reunite with *Shekhinah*. In the verse from Psalms, *Zion* now alludes to *Yesod*, who will be restored to His Beloved.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *A song of ascents. When YHVH restored Zion, we were like dreamers*. For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, note 133.

140. ***And bow down to YHVH...*** If *those who lose* refers to *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, what is meant by *and* [*they will*] *bow down to YHVH*? Rabbi Abba explains that this pertains not to *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, but to Israel—*those who were scattered in the land of Egypt*. For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, note 133.

141. ***YHVH will guard your going and your coming...*** Naturally, one needs to be protected when venturing out (*your going*), but why when returning home (*your coming*)?

Rabbi Abba explains that the demon "who dwells at the entrance" sees the mezuzah and is transformed into a protector, warding off any other malevolent forces whether outside or inside.

The phrase "words of the supernal Name" refers to the biblical passages from Deuteronomy contained in the mezuzah, since the Torah is pictured as one entire Name of God. See above, note 107. On the proclamation, "Show care for the honor of the image...," cf. above, note 95. On this passage, cf. *Zohar* 3:263b–264a (*Piq*).

142. **Not only is a person protected...** By a transformed demon or by angels, but also God Himself

guards him.

143. **the holy supernal Name…** The name *Shaddai*, inscribed on the back of the mezuzah's parchment. On the 365 demonic forces, see above at notes 106–7.

144. **who has left his Lord's domain…** By failing to place a mezuzah on his doorpost. See *Zohar* 3:264a (*Piq*).

145. **marked in every way with the insignia of their Lord…** Distinguished by numerous *mitsvot*. See above at note 125.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified*.

146. ***You shall love YHVH your God…*** The full verse reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*.

147. ***Now, what am I doing here?…*** The full verse reads: *Now, what have I here?* [or: *what am I doing here?*] *—declares YHVH—For My people has been taken away for nothing. Their rulers* [or: *their mockers*] *howl—declares YHVH—and constantly, all day long, My name is reviled*.

148. **the blessed Holy One delighted in His garden…** Namely, in *Shekhinah*. (Cf. above, note 76.) As the Divine Presence, She is referred to as פה (*poh*), *here*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *This is My resting place forever; here will I dwell, for I desired it*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Thus says YHVH: You were sold for nothing, and shall be redeemed without money*.

149. **there has been no joy…** Cf. M *Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: "Ever since the day that the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit." See above, pp. 583–84, n. 251.

God urges Israel to reciprocate His love for them: *You shall love YHVH your God*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *I*

clothe the heavens in blackness, and make sackcloth their covering.

150. **every sublime service that a person offers…** Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 41: "*To love YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 11:13)—let everything you do be done in love."

151. **the Ten Utterances of Torah are included here…** The Ten Commandments (or Utterances) are alluded to in the *Shema* (or in its first paragraph: Deuteronomy 6:4–9). See JT *Berakhot* 1:4, 3c (in the name of Rabbi Levi); *Midrash Aggadah*, Deuteronomy 5:11; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 383–84; below, note 175.

152. ***with all your heart…*** The word *all* includes both the good impulse and the evil impulse. Similarly, *with all your soul* implies both the "good" soul and the "evil" soul," apparently referring to the higher soul and the animal soul.

See M *Berakhot* 9:5: "*With all* לבבך (*levavekha*), *your heart* —with both your impulses: the good impulse and the evil impulse." Ideally, one should serve God not only with the good impulse but even with the evil impulse—by subduing it, or by sublimating and channeling one's passions into virtuous action, thereby contributing the raw power of the evil impulse to the good. Cf. *Zohar* 2:162b–163b; Vol. 5, p. 440, n. 704.

On the wording *with all your soul*, see *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:7: "*With all your soul*—with every single soul that He created in you." See *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37; *Zohar* 2:163a; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 1:111, n. 38.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul,* ובכל מאדך (*uv-khol me'odekha*), *and with all your might*. The word מאד (*me'od*), often translated in this verse as *might*, is normally an adverb ("very"), not a noun. It may mean here [*You shall love YHVH*] *exceedingly* (literally *with all your veryness*). Perhaps because *me'od* implies "plenty," in rabbinic exegesis

ובכל מאדך (*uv-khol me'odekha*) was taken to mean "and with all your wealth, possessions, or substance."

See *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 6:5; M *Berakhot* 9:5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; BT *Berakhot* 61b; *Zohar* 2:27a, 162b; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 77; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 1:332.

153. **Even this is meant to be expounded...** As mentioned in the preceding note, in rabbinic literature the phrase בכל מאדך (*be-khol me'odekha*) was interpreted as "with all your wealth, possessions, or substance." On the statement "Even this is meant to be expounded," see Vol. 5, p. 521, n. 943.

154. **Whoever loves the blessed Holy One...** Such a person attains the rung of *Ḥesed* (Love). Abraham is the prime example of one who was crowned with this *sefirah*, as Rabbi Abba proceeds to explain. See above at note 67.

155. **Nor to his soul...** Abraham was selflessly devoted to God, and he even offered his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice.

On Abraham's extreme hospitality and his efforts to spread the awareness of God, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 43:7; 48:9; 49:4; 54:6; BT *Sotah* 10a–b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 7; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 12; *Midrash Tehillim* 37:1; 110:1; *Zohar* 1:230b. The full verse in Micah reads: *You will grant truth to Jacob, love to Abraham, as You swore to our fathers from days of old*.

156. **all worlds are blessed for his sake...** By attaining the rung of *Ḥesed*, one stimulates the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*, who conveys blessing to all the lower worlds.

Rabbi Abba construes יברכוכה (*yevarakhukha*), *will bless You*, as יברכו כה (*yevarakhu koh*), *will bless Koh*—which is a name of *Shekhinah*.

On the creative reading of Psalms 145:10, see *Zohar* 2:79b, 139b; 3:145b–146a; *ZḤ* 1c (*SO*), 85d (*MhN*, *Rut*). Cf. David Kimḥi, ad loc. On *Koh* ("here, thus") as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 340, n. 148.

157. **Have you seen something new?** Cf. JT *Shabbat* 8:1, 11a: “Rabbi Abbahu went to Tiberias. The disciples of Rabbi Yoḥanan saw him with his face shining. They said before Rabbi Yoḥanan, ‘Rabbi Abbahu has found a treasure!’ He said to them, ‘Why [do you say so]?’ They replied, ‘His face is shining.’ He said to them, ‘Perhaps he has heard some new Torah.’ He went to him and asked, ‘What new Torah did you hear?’ He replied, ‘An ancient *tosefta*.’ [Rabbi Yoḥanan] applied to him the verse *A person’s wisdom lights up his face* (Ecclesiastes 8:1).” See above, p. 65, n. 35.

158. **For now my soul ascended…** Rabbi Yose saw the heavenly reward bestowed upon martyrs who demonstrated extreme devotion to God in this world (which the angels call “that world”).

According to a rabbinic tradition, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. Here, the rivers turn into mountains. Balsam symbolizes *Binah*, who is known as the World that is Coming. See above, p. 144, n. 279; p. 201, n. 44. On mountains of balsam, see *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:15a (*MhN*), 83a–b, 87b, 175b; 3:67a, 91a, 144b (*IR*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:200b–201a, and the reference to *mountains of spices* in Song of Songs 8:14.

159. ***No eye has seen, O God, but You…*** The verse reads: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You* [literally: *He*] *will do for one who awaits You* [literally: *Him*]. See BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You*, [*what You will do for one who awaits You*].”

160. **The Companions have already asked…** Why the verse switches from the second person (*but You*) to the third person (*what He will do for one who awaits Him*). It should continue: *what You will do for one who awaits You*. See the preceding note; above, pp. 597–98, nn. 290, 292.

161. ***to gaze upon the beauty of YHVH…*** The phrase *the beauty of YHVH* refers to *Binah*, which issues from *Keter* (also known as the Holy Ancient One). *Tif'eret* (called the blessed Holy One) delights in this *beauty*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze* בנעם יהוה (*be-no'am YHVH*), *upon the beauty* [or: *delightfulness, loveliness*] *of YHVH*, ולבקר (*ul-vaqqer*), *and to reflect* [or: *search, seek, inquire, contemplate*], *in His temple*. See above, p. 51, n. 143.

162. **Who? The Ancient One…** This primordial hidden realm of *Keter*, upon which the heavenly reward depends, cannot be addressed directly in the second person. According to Rabbi Abba, the prophet Isaiah is addressing *Tif'eret*—*No eye has seen, O God, but You*—and referring to what the Ancient One (*He*) *will do for one who awaits Him*.

See *Zohar* 3:79b. On *Keter* as *He*, see also *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:129b–130a (*IZ*), 134b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*).

163. **the highest habitation of all…** The Palace of Love. God Himself is crowned with love. On the Palace of Love, see above, p. 134, n. 246.

164. **All is called Love…** The entire divine realm is suffused with love. The letters of the name יהוה (*YHVH*) symbolize the entire sefirotic spectrum in loving unification. The point-like י (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, while its upper tip symbolizes the hidden realm, *Keter*, which never separates from *Ḥokhmah*.

On the theme of love (in connection with Deuteronomy 6:5), see, e.g., *Zohar* 2:27a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 41–42. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Many waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. If a man offered all the wealth of his house for love, they would surely scorn him*.

165. **ה (*He*), as has been established...** The first ה (*he*) of יהוה (*YHVH*), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. She is continually united with *Ḥokhmah*, symbolized by the letter י (*yod*).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. This *river* symbolizes *Binah*, issuing from *Ḥokhmah* (described as *Eden*) and watering *Shekhinah* (the *garden*). See above, p. 201, n. 45.

The present tense of the verb *issues* emphasizes the continual flow of emanation. See *Zohar* 2:83a; 3:65b, 290b (*IZ*). For other examples of emphasizing the present tense, see *Zohar* 1:5a, 33b, 230a; 2:10a; above, p. 144, n. 279; Matt, "'New-Ancient Words,'" 201.

On the perpetual union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:11b, 50b, 55a, 56a; 3:4a, 11a, 61b, 65a–b, 77b–78a, 102a, 120a, 290b (*IZ*).

166. **ו ה (*Vav, he*)...** The ו (*vav*) of יהוה (*YHVH*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*). The second ה (*he*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*. This divine couple is united in love.

167. **י (*Yod*) with ה (*he*)...** *Ḥokhmah* unites with *Binah*; *Binah*, with *Tif'eret*; *Tif'eret*, with *Shekhinah*.

By fulfilling the command *You shall love YHVH your God*, a person stimulates and participates in the unification of all the *sefirot*.

168. ***These words that I command you today...*** For the context, see below, note 175.

169. ***All my bones will say...*** David the Psalmist was inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet how could he describe his bones as chanting a song? Can bones sing?

The verse in Psalms continues: *Saving the poor from one stronger than he, and the poor and the needy from his despoiler*. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate*

your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail. See above, p. 121, n. 206; p. 553, n. 155.

170. ***Saving the poor…*** God saves the good impulse (which is *poor* and weak like *flesh*) from the stronger evil impulse.

On the verse in Psalms, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 9, 32b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beshallaḥ* 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 34:2. The verse in Ezekiel reads: *I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh*. On this verse, see, e.g., *Vayiqra Rabbah* 35:5; BT *Sukkah* 52a.

171. **it is like iron…** It is as hard as iron and difficult to resist. Once it has inflamed a person's passions, it is like white-hot iron.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:803. On the evil impulse as iron, cf. BT *Sukkah* 52b (quoted below, note 174); *Matoq mi-Devash*.

172. **When the evil impulse comes…** On the evil impulse gradually moving in and taking over, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:6; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17, p. 324; BT *Sukkah* 52b.

173. **From the passage about David…** The parable that the prophet Nathan tells David, after the king had arranged for the death of Uriah the Hittite so that he could marry Bathsheba. The context in 2 Samuel (12:1–4) reads: *YHVH sent Nathan to David, and he came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a single town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had sheep and cattle in great abundance; and the poor man had nothing except one little ewe that he had bought. He nurtured her and raised her with him together with his sons. From his crust she would eat and from his cup she would drink and in his lap she would lie, and she was like a daughter to him. A wayfarer came to the rich man, and it seemed a pity to him to take from his own sheep and cattle to prepare for the guest who*

had come to him, so he took the poor man's ewe and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

For the application of this parable to the progress of the evil impulse, see the sources cited in the preceding note. On the progression of the evil impulse, see also BT *Shabbat* 105b (and parallels): "In the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Nuri: '… Such is the craft of the evil impulse: Today he tells him, "Do this"; and tomorrow he tells him, "Do that," until he tells him, "Worship idols," and he goes and worships.'"

Cf. BT *Sukkah* 52a (and parallels): "Rabbi Assi said, 'The evil impulse at first resembles the thread of a spider, but ultimately it resembles cart ropes, as is said: *Woe unto them who haul iniquity with flimsy cords, and sin as with a cart rope* (Isaiah 5:18).'"

The verse in Genesis (spoken by Joseph's brothers to their father, Jacob) reads: *The man who is lord of the land spoke harshly to us*. The verse in Ruth reads: *Elimelech*, נעמי איש (*ish no'omi*), *husband of Naomi* [or: *Naomi's husband*], *died*.

174. **a person should set words of Torah upon him…** The study of Torah overcomes the evil impulse. See BT *Sukkah* 52b: "A scholar from the school of Rabbi Yishma'el taught, 'If this repulsive one [i.e., the evil impulse] attacks you, drag him to the house of study. If he is of stone, he will dissolve; if of iron, he will shatter.'"

Cf. BT *Qiddushin* 30b: "The blessed Holy One said to Israel, 'My children, I created the evil impulse, and I created Torah as its antidote [or: spice]. If you occupy yourselves with Torah, you will not be delivered into his hand.'"

In the verse from Deuteronomy, the word לבבך (*levavekha*), *your heart*, contains a double ב (*vet*), instead of the simpler variant form לבך (*libbekha*), with one ב (*bet*). According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, the doubling of the letter is significant: it alludes to the two impulses within the human heart. Cf. above, note 152.

175. **this portion of *Shema*...** The first paragraph of the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) reads: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one. You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. These words that I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall retell them incisively to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates*.

Rabbi Shim'on identifies ten distinct commands here, corresponding to the Ten Commandments (or Utterances). See above, note 151.

176. **these passages...** The three paragraphs of the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Numbers 15:37–41), which are traditionally recited morning and evening. On the significance of the *Shema*, see above, p. 377, n. 271.

177. ***For she is your life and the length of your days...*** Torah is vital.

God made various stipulations concerning Israel's behavior when they entered the Promised Land; but the most important one was devotion to Torah, because *Shekhinah* settles in the world (and specifically in the land of Israel) only through the study of Torah, and She unites with *Tif'eret* above only through the stimulation provided by such study.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *To love YHVH your God, to heed His voice, and to cleave to Him, for He* [or: *that*] *is your life and the length of your days to dwell upon the soil* [or: *the land*] *that YHVH your God swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give to them*. The phrase כי הוא (*ki hu*), *for He* [or: *that*], refers either to God or to loving, heeding, and cleaving to Him.

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, the feminine pronoun היא (*hi*), *she*, is written as הוא, which is the same as the masculine pronoun (*hu*), *He* (or *that*). Here, Rabbi

El’azar transforms הוא (*hu*), *He*, into היא (*hi*), *she* (namely Torah). This same variation appears elsewhere, e.g., in *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; B, 31; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 15, *Ki Tissa* 15, *Shemini* 11; *Zohar* 1:92a, 168a, 244b; 2:62a, 86b, 194b. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi* on the verse; BT *Qiddushin* 40a.

178. **Oral Torah is known only by virtue of Written Torah…** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Oral Torah) is known and recognized only through the power of *Tif’eret* (symbolized by Written Torah).

In the verse from Deuteronomy, the phrase *upon the land* is unspecified, so its reference can include *Shekhinah*, the divine *land*, who dwells in the earthly *land* only through the study of Torah.

For the full verse, see the preceding note. On the passage in Jeremiah, cf. above, note 137.

179. **the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava…** This venerable source contains an interpretation of the passage in Exodus (21:10–11), which reads in full: *If another woman he takes for himself, he shall not diminish this one’s* [literally: *her*] *food, clothing, or conjugal rights. If he does not do these three for her, she shall go out* [or: *go free*] *for nothing* [or: *without compensation*], *with no money*.

In the biblical context, the subject is a slave-girl’s master and husband, who, if he *takes for himself* (i.e., marries) another woman, must continue to provide for the slave-girl (i.e., *this one*). If the master/husband does not provide for his slave-girl/wife, then she is liberated without having to buy her freedom. According to Rav Hamnuna Sava, this passage pertains to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). If the people of Israel fail to engage in Torah, they thereby deprive *Shekhinah* of Her nourishment, adornment, and union with *Tif’eret*. Consequently, *Shekhinah shall go out* into exile (referred to in Isaiah 50). The verse from Isaiah 52 demonstrates that the phrase *for nothing* pertains to exile.

The verse in Lamentations now implies that although *Shekhinah has become like a widow*—separated from *Tif'eret*—She is not really a widow, since Her divine partner is alive and intends to reunite with Her.

See *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:3, in the name of Rabbi Abba son of Kahana: "*She has become like a widow*. It is not written here *She has become a widow*, but rather *like a widow*—like a woman whose husband has journeyed across the ocean to a distant land but with the intention of returning to her."

See BT *Ta'anit* 20a, *Sanhedrin* 104a; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:3; *Zohar* 2:122a. The full verse in Lamentations, bemoaning the fall of Jerusalem, reads: *How does she sit alone, the city once full of people? She that was great among nations has become like a widow; the princess among states has become a thrall*.

In Exodus 21:10 the expression *her conjugal rights* reflects the traditional understanding of עׂנָתָה (*onatah*), whose precise meaning is uncertain. The term עׂונָה (*onah*) may mean "housing; oil or ointment." See Sarna, *Exodus*, ad loc.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

The full verse in Isaiah 50 reads: *Thus says YHVH: Where is your mother's bill of divorce by which I sent her away? Or which of My creditors was it to whom I sold you off? Behold, it is for your sins that you were sold, and for your crimes your mother was sent away*. The full verse in Isaiah 52 reads: *Thus says YHVH: You were sold for nothing, and shall be redeemed without money*. See above at note 148.

180. **did not respond to them at all...** Cf. the similar narrative in *Zohar* 1:204b–205a.

Rabbi El'azar's explanation—"Surely, he is consulting his Lord!"—means that the stranger is reciting *Tefillat ha-Derekh* (the Prayer for the Way). See BT *Berakhot* 29b:

“Elijah said to Rav Yehudah the brother of Rabbi Sala the Ḥasid, ‘Do not let your anger boil and you will not sin; do not get drunk and you will not sin; and when you set out on the way, consult your Creator and then set out.’ What is meant by ‘consult your Creator and then set out’? Rabbi Ya’akov said in the name of Rav Ḥisda, ‘This is *Tefillat ha-Derekh*.’”

181. **This man is either a fool or his ways are improper…** Either he doesn’t have the sense to associate with the wise, or he refuses to hear words of Torah. Cf. *Zohar* 2:94b–95a.

The concluding sentence refers to the importance of studying Torah while walking or traveling. See above, p. 319, n. 69.

182. ***The wise inherit glory…*** Immediately after suggesting that the stranger may be a fool, Rabbi El’azar quotes an appropriate verse. The verse reads: *The wise inherit honor* [or: *glory*], *and fools* מרים (*merim*), *take away* [or: *gain, acquire*; literally: *raises* (in the singular)], *disgrace*.

183. **We shouldn’t interrupt a word of Torah…** To greet this man.

The phrase “Glory of *YHVH*” refers to *Shekhinah*, whose splendor awaits those devoted to Torah, both in the afterlife and in this world.

184. ***And fools take away disgrace…*** One who is devoted to Torah inherits *Shekhinah* (known as *glory*) and is supported in the heavenly court by many spiritual advocates. Conversely, one who rejects Torah produces an accuser.

Rabbi El’azar reads the verbal participle in Proverbs hyperliterally: *and fools* מרים (*merim*), *raise, disgrace*—that is, they cause an accuser to rise to the heavenly court and testify against them. On this verse, see above, note 182.

See M *Avot* 4:11, in the name of Rabbi Eli’ezer son of Ya’akov: “A person who performs a single *mitsvah* acquires

one defender; a person who commits a single transgression acquires one accuser."

185. ***However, if the family of Egypt…*** In the biblical context, the prophet Zechariah describes how all the surviving nations that made war against Jerusalem will eventually make an annual pilgrimage to the Temple on the Festival of *Sukkot*, which is the beginning of the rainy season and is the time for petitioning God for rain. Zechariah 14:17–18 reads: *Any of the earth's families* [or: *communities*] *that does not make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow down to the King YHVH Tseva'ot shall receive no rain. However, if the family of Egypt does not make this pilgrimage, it shall not be visited by the same affliction with which YHVH will strike the other nations that do not come up to observe the Festival of Booths*. Since Egypt's agriculture is not dependent on rain (but on the Nile), it will suffer some other punishment (perhaps the one mentioned in verse 12).

Here "the Companions" apparently refers to medieval biblical commentators. See Ibn Ezra and David Kimḥi on Zechariah 14:18; cf. Rashi, ad loc. On Egypt's unique situation, see *Zohar* 1:109a.

186. ***For the land into which you are coming…*** The context (Deuteronomy 11:10–11) reads: *For the land into which you are coming to possess it is not like the land of Egypt from which you went out, where you sow your seed and water it with your foot like a garden of greens. But the land into which you are crossing to possess it is a land of mountains and valleys; by the rain of heaven it drinks water*. The expression *water it with your foot* apparently refers to some sort of foot pedal (or other device) used in the Egyptian system of irrigation. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 1:445; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 112; Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 936.

Whereas the Nile waters the land of Egypt, the Holy Land is watered by heaven. When Israel devoted

themselves to Torah, their land was watered abundantly—and *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the Holy Land) was nourished by *Tif'eret*. Whoever withholds Torah from *Shekhinah* interrupts the flow of emanation and withholds sustenance from the whole world. See above, notes 177–78.

187. ***YHVH would speak to Moses face-to-face…*** The anonymous stranger wonders what the connection is between the three components of the verse.

The conclusion of the verse reads: *and his attendant, Joshua son of Nun*, נער (*na'ar*), *a deputy* [or: *attendant, servant, lad, youth*] *would not depart from within* [or: *from*] *the Tent*.

188. **for now our union is genuine…** Rabbi El'azar is delighted that the stranger is joining them in holy study. Now that there are three of them engaged in Torah, *Shekhinah* will abide with them. Since the anonymous man had begun discussing this verse, Rabbi El'azar now encourages him to continue.

Actually, according to rabbinic tradition, even when fewer than three people engage in Torah, *Shekhinah* appears. See M *Avot* 3:6, in the name of Rabbi Ḥalafta: "Ten who are sitting engaged in Torah, *Shekhinah* settles among them…. even five…. even three…. even two…. even one…."

189. **By many supernal, precious rungs…** Moses attained a higher sefirotic rung than any other prophet. The others gazed into *Shekhinah*, who is described as "a speculum that does not shine," whereas he gazed into *Tif'eret*, "a shining speculum." *Shekhinah* does not shine with any light of Her own, but only reflects the other *sefirot*.

The word "speculum" renders אספקלריא (*ispaqlarya*), "speculum, glass, mirror, lens," deriving from Greek *speklon*, "mirror, window-pane," and Latin *speculum*, "mirror." See BT Yevamot 49b: "All the prophets gazed באספקלריא שאינה מאירה (*be-ispaqlarya she-einah me'irah*), through an opaque glass [literally: through an *ispaqlarya* that does not shine], whereas Moses our master gazed through a

translucent glass [literally: through an *ispaqlarya* that shines]."

Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face." See above, pp. 399–400, n. 345.

On the contrast between Moses and other prophets, see Numbers 12:6–8: *He said, "Hear My words: If there be among you a prophet of YHVH, in a vision I make Myself known to him, in a dream I speak with him. Not so My servant Moses, in all My house he is trusted. Mouth to mouth I speak with him;* ומראה (*u-mar'eh*), *and a vision* [or: *and clearly*; *manifestly*; *in plain sight*], *not in riddles; and the image of YHVH he beholds*."

See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 7:6; idem, *Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin* 10:1. On Moses' unique ability to hear God's word and remain standing firm, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357; *Zohar* 1:171a. Cf. *Zohar* 3:133a (*IR*).

The comparison of ape to human appears in rabbinic sources. See BT *Bava Batra* 58a, in the name of Rabbi Bana'ah: "Compared with Sarah, all others are like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Eve, Sarah was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Adam, Eve was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with *Shekhinah*, Adam was like an ape compared with a human." See above, p. 274, n. 85; below, page 745.

The full verse in Daniel reads: *I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I was in a deep sleep upon my face, with my face toward the ground*.

190. **without losing control…** Moses' prophetic experience did not impair his mind or alienate him from this world. Rather, immediately after seeing God *face-to-face, he would return to the camp* and respond to the people's needs.

On the significance of *he would return to the camp*, see *Targum Yerushalmi, Leqaḥ Tov*, and Rashi, ad loc.

191. ***Joshua son of Nun, a lad*—surely!...** The term נער (*na'ar*), *a lad*, alludes to the chief angel, Metatron, who is known as *na'ar* (youth, lad, [heavenly] servant). Metatron is closely associated with *Shekhinah*, so the fact that Joshua is described as *na'ar, a lad*, indicates that he suckled from *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by *the Tent*).

On Metatron as *na'ar*, see above, pp. 5–6, n. 12. On the sense of *na'ar* in the verse from Exodus, see above, note 187. The full verse in Samuel reads: *Samuel was ministering in the presence of YHVH, a lad girded in linen ephod*.

192. **As long as Joshua was with Moses...** He used to suckle from *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the Tent*) without fear. After Moses died and Joshua was on his own, he could not bear encountering even the angel who appeared to him at the battle of Jericho, much less *Shekhinah* Herself.

The context in Joshua (5:13–15) reads: *It happened when Joshua was at Jericho that he raised his eyes and saw, and look, a man was standing before him, his sword unsheathed in his hand. Joshua went toward him and said to him, "Are you ours or our enemies'?" He replied, "No, for I am the commander of YHVH's army. Now have I come!" Joshua fell on his face to the ground and prostrated himself, and he said to him, "What does my master say to his servant?" The commander of YHVH's army said to Joshua, "Remove your sandal from your foot, for the place on which you stand is holy." And Joshua did so*.

193. **As for me, since I am with you...** The anonymous stranger declares that the Companions' supportive presence emboldens him.

194. ושננתם **(*Ve-shinnantam*), *You shall retell them incisively...*** This form of the root שנן (*shnn*) means either "to repeat" or "to teach incisively," and the biblical author may be playing with both senses. Here, drawing on midrashic tradition, the anonymous man relates the verb *ve-shinnantam* to the adjective שנונים (*shenunim*), *sharpened*, in Psalms.

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 34: "ושננתם (*Ve-shinnantam*), *You shall retell them incisively*—that they should be clear-cut in your mouth, so that if a person asks you something, you should not stammer [or: hesitate], but rather answer him immediately. And thus Scripture says:… *Your arrows* שנונים (*shenunim*), *sharpened* (Psalms 45:6)."

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 6:7; BT *Qiddushin* 30a–b. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, note 175.

195. **every single word of Torah…** On the significance of every word (and every element) of Torah, see above, p. 156, n. 13.

196. ודברת **(*Ve-dibbarta*), *And speak, of them…*** The anonymous stranger plays upon the fact that in Aramaic (and rarely in Hebrew), the root דבר (*dbr*) can mean "to lead, conduct."

197. **to conduct himself with them pleasantly…** See BT *Gittin* 6b–7a: "Rav Ḥisda said, 'A person should never cast excessive fear upon his household….' … Rabbah son of Bar Ḥanah said, 'Regarding what the Rabbis said—"On the eve of Sabbath, as darkness sets in, a person should say three things to his household: 'Have you set aside tithes? Have you placed the *eruv*? Kindle the [Sabbath] lamp!'" (M *Shabbat* 2:7)—these should be said gently [or: pleasantly], so that they will accept them.'"

See BT *Shabbat* 34a. The term *eruv* (blending) refers here to the "joining" of courtyards (in order to permit carrying between private domains) and the "joining" of Sabbath borders (in order to extend the distance one is permitted to walk on Sabbath).

198. ***And when you go on the way…*** According to a rabbinic tradition, when Jacob was journeying to meet his long-lost brother Esau, "he prepared himself for three things: for prayer, for [offering] a gift, and for battle." The anonymous stranger adds that an even more important activity while one is on the road is to engage in Torah.

See above, note 46. On the importance of studying Torah while walking or traveling, see above, p. 319, n. 69.

199. ***And when you lie down…*** That is, when you lie down with your wife in bed. Sexual relations should be conducted "in reverence…, in holiness, in humility."

200. **For she bears much guilt…** See above, note 3.

201. ***You shall bind them as a sign on* ידכה (*yadekha*), *your hand*…** This verse in Deuteronomy actually reads *You shall bind them as a sign on* ידך (*yadekha*), *your hand*; but the anonymous stranger replaces the normal spelling ידך (*yadekha*) with the unusual spelling ידכה (*yadekhah*), using an archaic, superfluous ה (*he*) as in Exodus 13:16: *It shall be a sign on* ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*. This unusual spelling ידכה (*yadekhah*) is understood (in BT *Menaḥot* 37a) as implying יד כהה (*yad kehah*), "weak hand," designating where the *tefillah* (phylactery) should be strapped: on the left hand of those who are right-handed, or the right hand of those who are left-handed. See above, note 79.

According to the legendary Book of *Aggadta*, the unusual reading ידכה (*yadekhah*) implies יד כה (*yad koh*), *the hand of thus* —namely "the hand of *Shekhinah*," who is known as כה (*koh*) "thus, so." The implied reading *the hand of thus* alludes to the notion that the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand signifies *Shekhinah*.

In the verse from Genesis, God promises Abraham countless descendants: *He took him outside and He said, "Look up to the heavens and count the stars, if you can count them." And He said to him*, "כה (*Koh*), *Thus* [or: *So*], *shall be your seed*." Now this verse implies that Abraham's descendants (the people of Israel) will derive from, and be intimately linked with, *Shekhinah* (*Thus*), who is known as Assembly of Israel.

On the *Zohar*'s reading of ידכה (*yadekhah*) in the verse from Deuteronomy, see *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. Cf. Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:90a–b, 96a–b; 3:148a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 12a. On *Koh* as a name of

Shekhinah, see above, p. 340, n. 148. On the term *Aggadta*, see the Glossary.

202. **And our colleagues who dwell in the south…** Referring to certain kabbalists, who explain the sefirotic symbolism of tefillin in a particular way. Each of the two tefillin (worn respectively on the head and on the arm) contains four passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) written on parchment. The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head is divided into four compartments, each containing one of the four passages, whereas in the *tefillah* of the arm (or hand) all four passages are written on one piece of parchment in a single compartment. According to these "colleagues who dwell in the south," the first passage (and compartment of the *tefillah* of the head) corresponds to *Keter* (Crown)—Aramaic, כתרא (*kitra*)—since this passage mentions *every firstborn*, and this general ("unspecified") wording includes the first *sefirah*.

The second passage (and compartment) corresponds to *Ḥokhmah*; the third, to *Binah*; the fourth, to *Ḥesed*. Afterward, all four passages are included in a single compartment in the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the (left) arm, which symbolizes *Gevurah* (Power) and is called עז (*oz*), *strength*.

The image here (and the identification of *strength* with tefillin) derive from the Talmudic passage describing God Himself as wearing tefillin. See BT *Berakhot* 6a, in the name of Rabbi Yitsḥak: "How do we know that the blessed Holy One puts on tefillin? For it is said: *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength* (Isaiah 62:8). *By His right hand*—this is Torah, as is said: *From His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). *And by the arm of His strength*—this is tefillin, as is said: *YHVH gives strength unto His people* (Psalms 29:11). How do we know that tefillin are a strength to Israel? For it is written: *All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of YHVH is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you* (Deuteronomy 28:10), and it has been taught: Rabbi

Eli'ezer the Great says, 'This refers to the tefillin of the head.'" See above, note 52.

The statement "*Strength* is nothing but Torah" is based on another midrashic reading of Psalms 29:11: *YHVH gives strength unto His people*. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; Vol. 7, p. 76, n. 234. On the connection between *Gevurah* and Torah, see above, p. 168, n. 4. Cf. the phrase מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), "from the mouth of [Divine] Power," discussed above, notes 31–32.

Regarding the phrase "our colleagues who dwell in the south," the Talmud sometimes refers to sages "who dwell in the south," that is, in the province of Judea, especially in or around Lydda. Here, however, the phrase refers to certain kabbalists. See BT *Bava Batra* 96a, *Zevaḥim* 22b; *Zohar* 3:10a, 120a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1186.

On the significance of the four compartments, see above, note 52. On the phrase *"every firstborn*, unspecified," cf. above, note 55. For the full verses in Exodus 13:2, 11; Deuteronomy 6:4–5; 11:13, see above, notes 55, 57, 65–66, 68.

203. **But these words do not seem right to us...** The anonymous stranger objects to the sefirotic symbolism of the four passages (and compartments) of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head as presented by "our colleagues who dwell in the south." They had associated the first passage with *Keter*, but this primordial all-inclusive *sefirah* "is not reckoned" with the other *sefirot*, since it is not emanated as they are, but rather eternally coexistent with *Ein Sof*. The first passage (mentioning *every firstborn*) corresponds, instead, to *Ḥokhmah*, who is the first *sefirah* that can be counted or in any way known. See *Zohar* 1:31b.

The second passage (which begins: *So when YHVH brings you to the land of the Canaanite*...) mentions the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 13:14–15), which is associated with *Binah*, who is also called Jubilee and is the source of all liberation. (See above, note 62.) This contradicts the view of

“our colleagues who dwell in the south” that the second passage corresponds to *Ḥokhmah*.

The third and fourth passages of the tefillin apparently correspond to *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*. See above at notes 65–69; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 4; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1187.

The Talmudic statement that “the blessed Holy One puts on tefillin” (quoted in the preceding note) now implies that *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is adorned with *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*, which are represented by the four passages in the tefillin.

The phrase “four above, four below” refers to the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head and the *tefillah* of the arm (or hand), each of which contains the four biblical passages, representing four divine potencies. The *tefillah* of the head is “in the site of the brain” (corresponding to the brain of *Ze’eir Anpin*), whereas the *tefillah* of the arm is near the heart, which symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Both tefillin together symbolize the sefirotic union. See above, notes 52, 80; *Zohar* 2:162a; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1162; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

204. **A person should adorn himself with them…** By wearing tefillin, one displays the Name *YHVH*, whose four letters correspond to the four biblical passages—or to the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head. See above, notes 52–53. For another interpretation, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1188.

The verse in Song of Songs reads: *The dangling locks of your head like royal purple; a king is captured* [or: *bound*] ברהטים (*ba-rehatim*), *by the flowing tresses*. Here, *rehatim, flowing tresses*, alludes to רהיטי (*rehitei*), “channels,” in the four compartments of tefillin, in which the divine King is bound.

See above, note 52. Cf. Rashi on Song of Songs 7:6. According to Tishby (in *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1188), *rehatim* alludes here to the straps of tefillin, in which God is

bound. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see the passage from BT *Berakhot* 6a, quoted above, note 202.

205. **Nevertheless, *You shall write them…*** Although one is glorified and protected by tefillin, he should still inscribe the first two passages of the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21) *on the doorposts* of his house in the mezuzah.

The phrase "inscribed above, inscribed below" may mean that one is inscribed in heaven and distinguished on earth. Or perhaps "above" and "below" refer respectively to tefillin and mezuzah. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1188.

See BT *Menaḥot* 43b, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Ya'akov: "Whoever has tefillin on his head, tefillin on his arm, tzitzit on his garment, and a mezuzah on his entrance is guaranteed not to sin." Cf. JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14d.

206. **We find two verses…** Both of these verses depend "on one," namely on *Shekhinah*, who is known as כה (*Koh*), *Thus*. However, "they are not on one rung," because the first verse features the divine name *YHVH Tseva'ot* (signifying Compassion), whereas the second verse features *YHVH Elohim* (signifying Judgment), as Rabbi El'azar immediately explains.

On *Koh* (thus, here) as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 340, n. 148. The formula in 1 Samuel—*Thus says YHVH Tseva'ot*—appears over seventy-five times in the Bible. The name *YHVH Tseva'ot* means *YHVH of armies* (or *hosts*).

The formula in Isaiah actually reads: *Thus says* אדני יֱהוִֹה (*Adonai YHVH*), although the vowels accompanying the name יהוה (*YHVH*) are the vowels of the name אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), and in this formula the second name is pronounced *Elohim*. In the text of the *Zohar* here, the double name is spelled יי׳ אלהים (*YY Elohim*); the first name is a standard abbreviation of יהוה (*YHVH*). The formula *Thus says* אדני יהוה (*Adonai YHVH*, or *Adonai Elohim*) appears over one hundred times in the Bible.

207. **this *Koh* is blessed by Righteous One…** The formula *Koh, Thus, says YHVH Tseva'ot* implies that *Shekhinah* (known as *Koh*) is blessed by the sefirotic triad of *Yesod, Netsaḥ*, and *Hod*. Here *YHVH* refers to *Yesod* (also called Righteous One), while *Tseva'ot* refers to *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*. In such a case, the prophetic utterance "comes assuaged," that is, it issues from *Shekhinah*, who has been tempered by the compassionate nature of *Yesod, Netsaḥ*, and *Hod*.

The formula *Koh, Thus, says YHVH Elohim* implies that *Shekhinah* is influenced by *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), who is known by the name *Elohim*. In such a case, the prophetic utterance conveys a harsher message. Yet this Judgment is combined with Compassion, as indicated by the double name *YHVH Elohim*, since *YHVH* signifies Compassion.

The particular formula expressed by the prophet indicated the sefirotic source of his message, which could be discerned by his listeners among the faithful of Israel.

See *Zohar* 3:11b, 296a (*IZ*). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. On the names *YHVH* and *Elohim* as signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, p. 240, n. 21.

208. ***'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of YHVH…*** The biblical context is the Song of Deborah, thanking God for overcoming the Canaanite enemy who threatened His people. The town Meroz has not been identified; here it is cursed because its inhabitants did not join Deborah and Barak in battle.

Shekhinah (or *Matronita*) is entrusted with conducting the affairs of the world, and She wields all of the divine weapons. On the latter motif, see *Zohar* 2:51a–b; 3:10b, 34b, 42b, 104a, 106a, 150a; *ZḤ* 7b.

The context in Song of Songs (3:7–8) reads: *Here is the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding it, of the warriors of Israel—all of them skilled with a sword, expert in war, each with his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night*. Here, *the bed of Solomon* represents *Shekhinah*,

who is surrounded and protected by angelic warriors. See above, p. 483, n. 610.

209. ***From heaven the stars did battle…*** Battling on behalf of Israel.

According to the *Zohar*, the prophetess Deborah renewed Israel's commitment to the complete ritual of circumcision. Until she intervened, they had performed only the first stage of this ritual: cutting and removing the foreskin, thereby disclosing the mucous membrane. They had failed to complete the ritual by then tearing the membrane down the center and pulling it back, thereby revealing the corona. This second act is called פריעה (*peri'ah*), "uncovering" the corona.

Once the people "willingly offered to uncover the holy insignia [of the covenant of circumcision] in their flesh," *Shekhinah* (pictured as the divine *sword… of the covenant*) waged war against the Canaanite commander, Sisera.

On *peri'ah*, see M *Shabbat* 19:6: "If one circumcises but does not uncover the circumcision, it is as if he has not circumcised." See above, pp. 67–68, n. 44. On Israel's not performing *peri'ah*, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 29. On Deborah's inspiring Israel to perform *peri'ah*, see *Zohar* 1:32a–b, 93b; 2:3b.

The context in Judges (5:20–21) reads: *From heaven the stars did battle, from their courses they battled with Sisera*. [Or: *From heaven they did battle; the stars from their courses battled with Sisera*.] *The wadi Kishon swept them away, an ancient wadi, the wadi Kishon. March on, my soul, in valor!* The verse in Leviticus reads: *I will bring against you a sword avenging with vengeance of the covenant*. In the *Zohar*, the divine sword is often identified as *Shekhinah*.

210. **Every single star has its own name…** See Psalms 147:4: *He counts the number of the stars, to all of them gives names*.

According to the *Zohar*, as Israel was escaping from Egyptian bondage, Samael lent Egypt's heavenly prince six hundred chariots to defeat Israel and force them back into slavery. The apparent redundancy of the verse in Exodus (*He took six hundred select chariots and all the chariots of Egypt*) yields a new meaning: *He* [namely the heavenly prince of Egypt] *took six hundred select chariots* provided by Samael *and all the chariots of Egypt*. Now, in the defeat of Sisera, God retaliated against Samael, by sweeping away the demonic Canaanite enemy with the waters of the Kishon (recalling the waters of the Red Sea). The punishment by fire was for the Canaanite oppression of Israel.

On the connection between the *six hundred select chariots* in Egypt and Sisera's defeat, see *Zohar* 2:46b, 51a–b; Recanati on Exodus 14:7, 43a. Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 118b; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For the context in Judges, see the preceding note.

211. **Among those stars…** Drawing on one Talmudic view, Rabbi Aḥa identifies the one star (who refused to join in the attack against Sisera) with Meroz. See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16a.

The *angel of* YHVH mentioned in the verse from Judges is *Shekhinah*, who is described in Exodus as *the angel of* Elohim. On *Shekhinah* as *angel*, see above, p. 256, n. 31. On Her military role, see above, note 208. For the context in Exodus, see above, p. 93, n. 115.

212. ***For they did not come to the aid of YHVH…*** Meroz and its cohort did not join the battle against the Egyptians at the Red Sea, nor did they join the *sixty* angelic *warriors* in defeating Sisera.

213. **This is the angel…** *Shekhinah*. She will be glorified in the time to come, will magnify the Holy Name, and will punish all of Israel's enemies.

The context in Genesis (48:15–16) records Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim: *He blessed Joseph and said, "The God in whose presence my*

fathers walked, Abraham and Isaac, the God who has tended me since I came to be until this day, the angel [or: *the messenger*] *redeeming me from all evil—may He bless the lads. Let my name be called in them and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac; let them teem multitudinous* [or: *let them teem like fish multitudinously*] *in the midst of the earth*." See above, p. 256, n. 31.

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *I will display My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known* [or: *I will be magnified and sanctified and made known*] *in the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I am* YHVH. On God's name being magnified, see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

214. **Look, *Shekhinah* is here!...** She appears with those who are engaged in Torah. See above, note 188.

Rabbi Shim'on wishes to "show gratitude to the face of *Shekhinah*" by offering words of Torah, as he now proceeds to do. On the association of "the face of *Shekhinah*" with the study of Torah, see above, p. 549, n. 146.

215. ***Look, the day is still long...*** In the biblical narrative in Genesis, Jacob wonders why the shepherds are waiting to water the sheep. The context (Genesis 29:7–8) reads: *He said, "Look, the day is still long; it is not time to gather in the herd. Water the sheep and go and let them graze." They said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone off the mouth of the well and we water the sheep*."

Here *the day* represents one divine day, which equals a thousand years, based on Psalms 90:4: *For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday that has passed*. According to a rabbinic tradition, Israel's exile will last for one such divine day. Following this period, if the people turn back to God in *teshuvah*, they will be redeemed by the merit of Torah.

On Israel's exile lasting a thousand years, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:40; 2:3; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (Friedlander)

28, (Higger) 27; *Zohar* 1:116b–117a; 2:17a (*MhN*), 227a–b; *ZḤ* 28c (*MhN*). Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 4.

216. **If they do not engage in *teshuvah*...** Then the millennial *day* of exile is extended—*still long*—and the flock of Israel is not gathered in. The only remedy is to *water the sheep* with Torah; then they will be redeemed and will *graze* in the land of Israel.

217. **the day called *a day of tumult*...** On which the (Second) Temple was destroyed. This occurred in 70 C.E. Because of Israel's "evil deeds," the millennial "day" of exile has been prolonged, which explains why in the time of the *Zohar* (toward the end of the thirteenth century), redemption has not yet arrived.

Alternatively, the millennial "day" of exile refers to the fifth millennium (of traditional Jewish chronology), extending from 240 C.E.–1240 C.E. See *Or Yaqar*. The verse in Isaiah foretells the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem.

218. ***We cannot until all the flocks are gathered*...** That is, until all the other cosmic "days"—the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*—are gathered, and *they roll the stone* (the harsh Judgment of the demonic force, or "day") off of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *the well*. Then Israel will be watered by Torah (or by the flow of emanation), issuing from *the well* of *Shekhinah*.

On rolling *the stone*, see *Zohar* 1:152a, 152a (*ST*); 2:230a; 3:62a, 239b. On *Shekhinah* accompanying Israel in exile, see above, p. 393, n. 318. For the context in Genesis, see above, note 215.

219. **Who is 'the end of days'?...** The phrase הימים אחרית (*aḥarit ha-yamim*), "the last (or end) of days," refers to *Shekhinah*, who is the last of the *sefirot* (the cosmic days). Israel endured exile along with Her.

The quotation *When all these things come upon you* באחרית הימים (*be-aḥarit ha-yamim*), *in the end of days* is a

conflation of Deuteronomy 30:1 and 4:30. The phrase *all these things* refers to the punishment of exile. Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *be-aḥarit ha-yamim* as *with the end of days*—namely with *Shekhinah* (or Assembly of Israel), who shares Israel's suffering.

However, *Shekhinah* does not only suffer; She executes Divine Judgment and wreaks vengeance upon Israel's enemies, as demonstrated by the verse in Numbers. That verse (spoken by Balaam to King Balak) reads in full: *Now, I am about to go to my people. Let me counsel you what this people will do to your people* באחרית הימים (*be-aḥarit ha-yamim*), *in days to come* [or: *in the end of days*]. Here, again, Rabbi Shim'on construes *be-aḥarit ha-yamim* as *with* [or: *by means of*] *the end of days*—namely by means of *Shekhinah*.

The concluding sentence means that wherever the phrase *aḥarit ha-yamim* appears, it alludes to *Shekhinah*. See, e.g., *Zohar* 1:234b; 2:189b–190a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6. On Her avenging role, see above at note 209; cf. note 208.

220. **The blessed Holy One intends...** To restore *Shekhinah* to the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

The concluding sentence apparently means that *Shekhinah* is "a day," specifically *aḥarit ha-yamim*, "the last (or end) of days." For other interpretations, see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

221. **When a shadow starts to form...** At the beginning of the millennial "day" of redemption. This "other day" begins either a thousand years after the destruction of the (Second) Temple (1070 C.E.) or at the start of the sixth millennium (1240 C.E.). See above, note 217.

Just as the destruction of the (First) Temple was marked by (evening) shadows, so the redemption will be marked by (morning) shadows of the new millennial "day." See *Zohar* 3:16a.

On the *shadows of evening*, see BT *Ta'anit* 29a: "On the seventh [of Av] the heathens [the Babylonians] entered the

Temple, ate there, and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth. Toward dusk on the ninth, they set fire to it, and it continued burning all that day, as is said: *Woe to us, for the day is fading, for shadows of evening are stretching!"* See *Tosefta Ta'anit* 3:10; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 27; *Zohar* 1:230a; 3:75a.

The measure of "six and a half fists" refers to a specific extent of time after the start of the millennial "day" of redemption. Cf. the references to "six moments and half a time" and "six and a half years" in *Zohar* 1:119a (Vol. 2, pp. 188–89). See also *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the date of the final redemption, see *Zohar* 1:116b–119a, 139a–b (*MhN*); 2:9b–10a; 3:249a (*RM*), 251b–252a (*RM*).

The full verse in Jeremiah includes the battle cry of the Babylonian army and the lament of the besieged residents of Jerusalem: *"Prepare for battle against her! Arise, let us attack at noon!" "Woe, unto us, for the day is fading, for shadows of evening are stretching!"*

222. **The mnemonic for this mystery...** In the verse from Job, *yesterday* alludes to the millennial "day" of exile, and *a shadow* alludes to the sign of redemption near the beginning of the new millennial "day," signaling the time when God will renew *our days* and "settle us *upon the land*" of Israel.

See *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Job reads: *For we are but yesterday, unknowing, for our days are a shadow* עלי ארץ (*alei arets*), *upon earth* [or: *upon the land*].

223. **Happy is the share...** The time of redemption will be glorious but also terrifying. The reunion of the divine couple will be earth-shattering.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 98b: "Ulla said, 'May [the Messiah] come, but may I not see him!'" On the image of lions uniting, see ibid. 106a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Woe to the nation that may be found [attempting to hinder or

interfere] when the blessed Holy One enacts the redemption of His children! Who would cast his garment between a lion and a lioness when they are coupling?"

In this Talmudic passage, the lion and lioness represent respectively the blessed Holy One and the earthly Assembly of Israel, with whom God reunites at the time of redemption. Here in the *Zohar*, the two lions represent the blessed Holy One and *Shekhinah* (who is known as Assembly of Israel). See *Zohar* 3:95b.

The full verse in Amos reads: *A lion has roared, who will not fear? My Lord God has spoken, who will not prophesy?*

224. ***He roars mightily over His abode…*** When the Temple is destroyed, God roars and moans. When He comes to reunite with *Shekhinah*, He roars triumphantly.

Rabbi Shim'on asks about the repetition of the verb *return* in the verse from Deuteronomy: *YHVH your God will return your captivity. … He will return*. He explains that *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) *will return* from exile, and *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) *will return* and couple with Her.

See BT *Megillah* 29a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai: "Come and see how beloved are Israel in the sight of the blessed Holy One! Wherever they went in exile, *Shekhinah* accompanied them. When they were exiled to Egypt, *Shekhinah* was with them…. When they were exiled to Babylon, *Shekhinah* was with them…. And even when they are destined to be redeemed, *Shekhinah* will be with them, as is said: ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך (*Ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha*), *YHVH your God will return with your captivity* (Deuteronomy 30:3). The verse does not read והשיב (*ve-heshiv*), *will restore*, but rather ושב (*ve-shav*), *will return*. This teaches that the blessed Holy One will return with them from amidst the exile."

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH your God will restore your fortunes* [or: *will return your captivity*] *and have compassion on you* [or: *and take you back in love*]. *He*

will return and gather you from all the nations where YHVH your God has scattered you. According to the midrashic reading, the word את (*et*) in the clause ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך (*Ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha*), *YHVH your God will return your captivity,* is construed not as signaling the direct object (*your captivity*), but rather as meaning *with*, thereby yielding the radical reading: *YHVH your God will return with your captivity*. See *Mekhilta, Pisḥa* 14; *Sifrei*, Numbers 84, 161; Vol. 8, pp. 71–72, n. 49.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *YHVH roars from on high, and from His holy habitation He utters His voice; He roars mightily over His abode*.

225. **[283a]** The passage entitled *Matnitin* on 3:270b will be translated in Vol. 11 (along with other such passages). The two passages extending from the bottom of 3:270b to the middle of 3:271b, and from the bottom of 3:277b to the top of 3:278a, are both from *Piqqudin* and will be translated in Vol. 12 (along with other such passages). The passage from the middle to the bottom of 3:274a appears also in 1:18b–19a and has been translated in Vol. 1.

The rest of the material from the middle of 3:271b to the bottom of 3:283a is from *Ra'aya Meheimna*, composed in the early fourteenth century. This entire composition is not included in *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, as mentioned in Vol. 1, p. xv, n. 2.

1. ***Who sent His glorious arm…*** Before expounding this verse, Rabbi Ḥizkiyah celebrates the good fortune of the people of Israel. God related to them intimately and sought to make them like the angels, "corresponding to the pattern above."

On Israel as God's firstborn, see Exodus 4:22: *My son, My firstborn, Israel*. The motif of Israel as God's brothers is based on Psalms 122:8: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, "Peace be within you."* This verse is addressed by the Psalmist to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*. See above, p. 40, n. 110.

The image of "clouds of glory" derives from rabbinic tradition, according to which such clouds shielded Israel in the desert. See above, p. 66, n. 39.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Who sent His glorious arm to be at Moses' right hand, splitting the waters before them to make Himself an everlasting name*. The full verse in Exodus 13 reads: *YHVH was going before them by day in a column of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a column of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and by night*. In the *Zohar*, the *column of cloud* and the *column of fire* represent *Shekhinah*.

2. **Three holy siblings…** See BT *Ta'anit* 9a: "Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Yehudah says, 'Three fine leaders arose for Israel, namely Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; and through them were given three fine presents, namely the well [that miraculously accompanied Israel through the desert], the cloud [of glory shielding them], and manna. The well, by the merit of Miriam; the pillar of cloud, by the merit of Aaron; manna, by the merit of Moses. When Miriam died, the well disappeared, as is said: *Miriam died there* (Numbers 20:1), and immediately afterward is written *There was no water for the community* (ibid., 2); and it returned by the merit of the two [others, Moses and Aaron]. When Aaron died, the

clouds of glory disappeared, as is said: *The Canaanite, king of Arad, heard* (ibid. 21:1). What news did he hear? He heard that Aaron had died and that the clouds of glory had disappeared; and he thought that he was permitted to make war against Israel.' This corresponds to what is written: *All the community saw that Aaron had expired* (ibid. 20:29)—[with reference to which] Rabbi Abbahu said, 'Do not read וַיִּרְאוּ (*va-yir'u*), *they saw*, but rather וַיֵּרָאוּ (*va-yera'u*), *they were seen* [because with the disappearance of the clouds of glory, Israel became visible and exposed].'… Both of them [the well and the cloud] returned by the merit of Moses. When Moses died, all of them disappeared."

According to Rabbi Ḥizkiyah, Aaron represented *Ḥesed*, the divine right arm. When he died, the people of Israel were deprived of this arm and became unbalanced. The place-name הָאֲתָרִים (*ha-atarim*), *Atharim*, now implies that Israel had to support themselves "in every אתר (*atar*)," which in Aramaic means "place."

On the passage in BT *Ta'anit*, see Vol. 8, pp. 157–58, n. 294. The context in Numbers (21:1–2) reads: *The Canaanite, king of Arad, who dwelled in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by way of Atharim, and he battled against Israel and took some of them captive. Israel made a vow to YHVH and said, "If You indeed give this people in my hand, I will put its towns under the ban."* The idiom *put under the ban* means to devote to utter destruction.

3. **Aaron was the right arm…** He symbolized *Ḥesed*.

The verse in Isaiah reads: מוֹלִיךְ לִימִין מֹשֶׁה זְרוֹעַ תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ (*Molikh li-ymin Moshe zero'a tif'arto*), *Who sent the arm of His glory* [or: *His glorious arm*] *to be at Moses' right* [or: *right hand*]. This now implies that God sent Aaron, symbolizing *Ḥesed, to be at Moses' right hand*. Aaron is referred to here as זְרוֹעַ תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ (*zero'a tif'arto*)—construed as *the arm of His Tif'eret*, namely the arm on the right of *Tif'eret* (who is symbolized by Moses). See *Zohar* 3:34b, 142b (*IR*). For the full verse, see above, note 1.

4. ***Moses went…*** Rabbi Ḥizkiyah wonders about this wording, since the verse does not indicate where Moses went. However, Moses represents *Tif'eret* (the trunk of the divine body), which was now missing the right arm (represented by Aaron, who had died). Consequently, Moses wanted to depart.

The Masoretic text reads: וילך משה וידבר (*Va-yelekh mosheh va-ydabber*), *Moses went and spoke, these words to all Israel*. Rabbi Ḥizkiyah's question—"Where did he go?"—is entirely reasonable, since it is not clear where Moses went to speak these further words. In fact, a better reading is preserved in a manuscript from Qumran (which is also reflected in the Septuagint): ויכל משה לדבר (*Va-ykhal mosheh le-dabber*), *Moses finished speaking, these words to all Israel*. Moses has completed his discourse, and the epilogue now concerns itself with various topics of closure, including the transfer of authority to Joshua and Moses' death. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 289; Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 1031. The verse in Lamentations reads: *They walked* [or: *went*] *feebly before the pursuer*.

5. **All the days of Moses…** As long as he lived, his *sefirah, Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun) prevailed, and Israel was nourished by the manna, which is described as *bread from heaven*—issuing from *Tif'eret* (who is symbolized by *heaven*). After Moses died and the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, *the manna ceased and they ate from the yield of the land*—issuing from *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by *the land*, or *the earth*).

Throughout Moses' life, "the body of the sun (*Tif'eret*) was complete." Following his death, "the body of the moon (*Shekhinah*) emerged," represented by Joshua. According to rabbinic tradition, "The face of Moses was like the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon." See *Sifrei*, Numbers 140; BT *Bava Batra* 75a.

On the manna, see above, note 2; *Zohar* 2:61b–63a. The context in Joshua (5:11–12) reads: *They ate from the yield*

of the land from the day after the Passover sacrifice, unleavened bread and parched grain on that very day. The manna ceased on the day after, when they ate from the yield of the land, and the Children of Israel no longer had manna, and they ate from the produce of the land of Canaan in that year.

6. ***If Your presence does not go…*** After the incident of the Golden Calf, which inflamed God's wrath, Moses insists that God Himself *go*—that is, *go with us*. It is not enough that the people be guided by *Shekhinah* (referred to here as *My angel* and symbolized by the moon); Moses demands that they be led by *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun).

Consequently, Moses was illumined by *Tif'eret* and he became like this radiant *sefirah*. When he died, he was replaced by Joshua, who represented *Shekhinah* and conveyed Her light.

The exclamation "Woe for that shame!" derives from the Talmudic passage comparing Moses and Joshua. When Moses was about to die, God told him to take Joshua and instructed him as follows: *You shall set some of your splendor upon him, so that the whole Israelite community will heed* (Numbers 27:20). The Talmud (BT *Bava Batra* 75a) notes: "*You shall set some of your splendor upon him*—and not *all your splendor*. The elders of that generation said: 'The face of Moses was like that of the sun; the face of Joshua was like that of the moon. Woe for that shame! Woe for that humiliation!'" See the preceding note; above, p. 209, n. 65.

The phrase "the sparkle of the sun" renders דשמשא קסטיפא (*qastipha de-shimsha*). The neologism *qastipha* apparently means "ray, sparkle." See *Derekh Emet*; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189; Vol. 5, p. 514, n. 923.

The context in Exodus 33 (15–16) reads: *If Your presence does not go* [*with us*], *do not take us up from here! How, then, will it be known that I have found favor in Your eyes, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with*

us, that I and Your people may be distinguished from every people that is on the face of the earth? The verse in Exodus 32 reads: *Look, My angel* [or: *My messenger*] *shall go before you*.

7. ***He said to them…*** The full verse records Moses speaking to the Israelites: *He said to them, "A hundred and twenty years old I am today. I can no longer go forth and come in, and YHVH has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.'"* The idiom *go forth and come in* means here to lead forces in battle.

According to Exodus 7:7, *Moses was eighty years old* when he confronted Pharaoh; so he led the Israelites for forty years.

8. ***Some are swept away without justice…*** In BT *Ḥagigah* 4b–5a, this verse is interpreted as referring to someone who dies before his time. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, the Companions explain it as meaning that when *Tif'eret*—known as משפט (*mishpat*), *justice*, and *Raḥamim* (Compassion)—removes Himself from *Shekhinah*, His quality of compassionate *justice* is lacking, and consequently the innocent may be *swept away* by harsh Judgment. Rabbi Shim'on will proceed to explain why it is sometimes necessary for a person to die before his time.

On the verse in Proverbs, see also *Zohar* 1:113b, 119a; 2:196a; 249a (*Heikh*); 3:40b, 54b, 59b, 291b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 77c (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 366–67; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 29, 117.

9. **All spirits issuing from above…** The soul is originally androgynous, reflecting the nature of both its divine parents, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. As it descends to earth, it splits in two and each half manifests as one gender within either a male or a female fetus. If a man is worthy, he finds his original soul mate and they reunite.

Sometimes, however, a man's intended female partner is married by another man before the intended man's time of marriage has come. Eventually, "when the time of this

(intended) coupling comes," *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness) removes the husband from the world (for whatever sins he may have committed), and the intended man marries his destined partner. This complicated procedure demonstrates the rabbinic formulation that matchmaking is as difficult for God "as splitting the Red Sea."

On the androgynous nature of the soul, see Plato, *Symposium* 189d–191d; *Zohar* 1:85b, 91b, 208a–b; 2:99b, 246a (*Heikh*); 3:43a–b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1355–56. Cf. the rabbinic tradition on the original nature of Adam in *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1: "Rabbi Yirmeyah son of El'azar said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 5:2).' Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.'" See Vol. 8, pp. 18–19, n. 54.

On the difficulties of divine matchmaking, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:4; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:1; BT *Sotah* 2a, *Sanhedrin* 22a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:4; *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b–92a, 207b–208a, 229a; 2:170b–171a. Cf. *Zohar* 2:101a–103a; 3:78b.

According to a Talmudic teaching, even if a man's mate has been decreed from above, if he has not yet found her, another suitor can "anticipate him by supplication" and obtain the other's intended mate. See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18b: "Shemu'el said, 'One is allowed to betroth a woman during the intermediate days of a festival, lest another [rival suitor] anticipate him.'… But could Shemu'el have said, 'Lest another anticipate him'? Surely Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shemu'el, 'Every single day, a heavenly echo issues, proclaiming: "The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so!…"' … Rather, 'lest another anticipate him by supplication.'" See *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b, 229a; 2:101a; 3:78b.

10. **All this because he corrupted his deeds…** That is, because the unintended husband sinned. His misdeeds were really not so severe that he deserved to die, but because the time of the intended husband to marry has come, the unintended husband is killed by the harsh Judgment of *Shekhinah* (who is known as Righteousness). This is an example of someone being *swept away without justice*. See above, note 8.

11. **Why? Let the blessed Holy One separate them…** Why does the unintended husband have to die? It would be better (and more just) if God simply arranged a divorce between the couple, enabling the intended husband to then marry the woman.

12. **If the deeds of this [intended] one are not worthy…** If the intended husband is unworthy, then the unintended husband is not eliminated.

13. **King Saul obtained the kingdom…** Although David was destined to become king, when the Israelites sought a king, he was still too young; so Saul was anointed king. When David's time came, *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—also known as Righteousness—removed Saul from the world, making way for David.

See BT *Ta'anit* 5b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "The blessed Holy One said, 'How shall I act?… Shall Saul not die?… The time for David to reign has already come, and one reign may not encroach on another by even a hairbreadth."

14. **so that he would not see his servant…** Namely, David.

15. **Similarly here…** In the case of an unintended husband, who dies so that he will not have to see his wife in the hands of another man (the intended husband).

On supplication and being pushed aside, cf. the passage from BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18b, quoted above, end of note 9.

16. ***YHVH said to me, 'Enough for you!…*** God refuses Moses' request to cross the Jordan.

According to Rabbi Shim’on, God was warning Moses that he should not “impair the world” by seeking to disturb the cosmic order. Moses represents *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the sun), whereas Joshua represents *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon). The latter (Joshua, *Shekhinah*, moon) is meant to serve the former (Moses, *Tif’eret*, sun), and not vice versa. Only when the sun sets can the moon shine and prevail; so Moses must depart before Joshua can assume leadership. If Moses (representing the sun and *Tif’eret*) enters the Promised Land, then the moon (corresponding to Joshua and *Shekhinah*) will be unable to rule.

On Moses and Joshua as representing respectively the sun and the moon, see above, note 5. The full verse in Deuteronomy 3 reads: *And YHVH was wrathful* [or: *was* cross] *with me because of you, and He did not listen to me. YHVH said to me, “Enough for you! Speak no more to Me of this matter.”* See above, pp. 665–66, nn. 21–22. The verse in Deuteronomy 31 reads: *YHVH said to Moses, “Look, your days have drawn near to die. Call Joshua and station yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may appoint* [or: *charge, commission, instruct, command*] *him.”*

17. ***that I may instruct him…*** But God proceeds to speak to Moses, so why does the verse read *that I may instruct him*, namely Joshua?

Actually, the wording in verse 19 includes both Moses and Joshua: כתבו לכם (*kitvu lakhem*), literally *write for yourselves*, employing the plural imperative. Furthermore, verse 23 reads: *He instructed* [or: *appointed, charged, commissioned, commanded*] *Joshua son of Nun and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you yourself will bring the Children of Israel into the land that I vowed to them, and I myself will be with you.”* Given the conclusion of the verse, the subject *He* refers to God.

For the full quotation of Deuteronomy 31:14, see the preceding note. Deuteronomy 31:16–17 reads: *YHVH said to Moses, “Here, you are about to lie with your fathers, and*

this people will rise and go whoring after the alien gods of the land into the midst of which they are coming, and they will forsake Me and violate My covenant that I have made with them. My wrath will flare against them on that day, and I will abandon them and hide My face from them, and they will become prey, and many evils and troubles will befall them. … Deuteronomy 31:19 reads in full: *Now, write down this song and teach it to the Children of Israel; put it in their mouths, so that this song will be My witness against the Children of Israel*.

18. הנך **(*Hinnekha*), *Here you are…*** Focusing on this single word, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that God was assuring Moses, "Even after your death, your soul will still be *here*—illumining Joshua," who is symbolized by the moon. Thus God will *instruct* Joshua through Moses. This is why the verse reads הנך (*Hinnekha*), *Here you are, about to lie with your fathers*, rather than simply *You will lie with your fathers*.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH said to Moses, "Here, you are about to lie with your fathers*, וקם העם הזה (*ve-qam ha-am ha-zeh*), *and this people will rise, and go whoring after the alien gods of the land*…. According to a related midrashic interpretation, it is possible to read the beginning of God's declaration as: *Here, you about to lie with your fathers ve-qam, and rise*—alluding to the eventual resurrection of Moses. See above, p. 208, n. 63. For the full verse, see the preceding note.

19. ***He charged Joshua son of Nun…*** Why does the first verse read תבא (*tavo*), *you will come*, and the second verse read תביא (*tavi*), *you will bring?*

Deuteronomy 31:7 reads in full: *Moses called to Joshua and said to him before the eyes of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous*, כי אתה תבא (*ki attah tavo*), *for you yourself will come, with this people into the land that YHVH swore to their fathers to give to them, and you yourself will enable them to possess it* [or: *to inherit it*]. Deuteronomy 31:23 reads in

full: *He appointed* [or: *charged, commissioned, instructed, commanded*] *Joshua son of Nun and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you yourself will bring the Children of Israel into the land that I vowed to them, and I myself will be with you*. Here, in quoting the first verse, the *Zohar* conflates its beginning with that of the second verse.

20. ***tavi, you will bring*—to announce his dominion over Israel…** God was assuring Joshua that he would *bring the Children of Israel into the land* and be their leader. On the distinction between the two formulations, see BT *Sanhedrin* 8a.

21. **מכנף (*Mi-kenaf*), *From the edge of, the earth we hear songs…*** The verse reads: מכנף (*Mi-kenaf*), *From the edge* [or: *end*] *of, the earth we hear songs* [or: *singing*]: *"Glory to the righteous!" And I said*, רזי לי רזי לי (*Razi li razi li*), *"I waste away! I waste away!* [or: *It is my secret! It is my secret!*]. *Woe is me! The treacherous have betrayed; with treachery the treacherous have betrayed!*

22. **מכנף (*Mi-kenaf*), *From the skirt of, the earth…*** Rabbi Shim'on plays on a related sense of כנף (*kenaf*), "hem, skirt" of a garment (or covering). The phrase *the skirt of the earth* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *earth* and associated with ציצת (*tsitsit*), *a tassel* [or: *fringe*], *on* כנפי (*kanfei*), *the hems* [or: *skirts*] *of, their garments* (Numbers 15:38).

See *Zohar* 3:175a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 49 (60). For the association of "covering" with the Female, see *Zohar* 3:142a (Vol. 8, p. 432, n. 396); below, pp. 843–44, n. 226.

23. ***We hear songs…*** Namely, songs of praise offered by *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) to Her Beloved, the blessed Holy One. The verse in Job alludes here to Her singing.

The phrase *in the night* is interpreted in two ways: either as referring to the dismal darkness of exile, or

literally to the *night*, when *Shekhinah* praises the blessed Holy One in preparation for their union.

On the verse in Job, see BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Zohar* 2:172b–173a; 3:23a–b. On Israel's exile as night, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:1. On the midnight scenario (and on Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*), see above, pp. 3–4, n. 6.

24. **זמירות (*Zemirot*), *Songs*...** Now Rabbi Shim'on associates זמירות (*zemirot*) with a different meaning of the root זמר (*zmr*): "to prune." Beginning at midnight, a holy spirit is aroused to prune and uproot all the threatening forces of harsh Judgment.

The context in Leviticus (25:3–4) reads: *Six years you shall sow your field and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its yield. But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath to YHVH: your field you shall not sow and your vineyard you shall not prune*.

The phrase in Isaiah—זמיר עריצים (*zemir aritsim*)—is often translated *singing of tyrants*, but here Rabbi Shim'on construes it as *pruning of tyrants*, namely of the harsh nighttime forces. See *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 25:14; Rashi on Exodus 15:2 and on Isaiah 25:5; *Zohar* 1:1a; 3:64b.

The term "wardens" renders גרדיני (*gardinei*), which is based on the Castilian *guardián*, "guardian." See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246–48; above, p. 507, n. 17.

On the midnight רוחא (*ruḥa*), "spirit" or "wind," see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "There was a harp suspended above [King] David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn." See above, p. 3, n. 6.

25. **praises uttered by Assembly of Israel...** Namely, by *Shekhinah*. Rabbi Shim'on returns here to his first interpretation of *We hear songs*. See above, note 23.

He then proceeds to play with צבי (*Tsevi*), *Glory*, and the Aramaic root צבי (*tsvy*), "to want, desire." *Shekhinah* expresses desire toward *Yesod* (known as Righteous One)—or She stimulates His desire—and thereby unites with the blessed Holy One (*Tif'eret* or *Ze'eir Anpin*) in holy matrimony. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

26. **רזי לי רזי לי (*Razi li razi li*), *'It is my secret! It is my secret!'*...** The secret pertains to the union of the divine couple, which generates holy souls. However, *Shekhinah* bemoans the fact that people betray both God and themselves by not engaging in sexual union in a holy manner and with pure intention. Consequently, the children they engender are defective, lacking the holy souls generated above, and then these children replicate the false ways of their parents. This replication is implied by the duplication at the end of the verse: *The treacherous have betrayed; with treachery the treacherous have betrayed!*

The concluding clause ("so they are defective above and below") apparently means that they fail to stimulate the union of the divine couple above, and both they and their children are tainted below.

On the consequences of holy and unholy sexual union, see BT *Nedarim* 20a–b, *Shevu'ot* 18b, *Niddah* 70b–71a; *Kallah* 1:8–10; *Kallah Rabbati* 1:11, 13,15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:7; *Zohar* 1:54a, 90b, 112a (*MhN*), 130b, 155a (*ST*), 222b; 2:11b, 95b; 3:49b, 56a, 77a, 80a–82a, 83b–84a; *ZḤ* 11a–b (*MhN*); *Iggeret ha-Qodesh* (in *Kitvei Ramban* 2:321–37); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1363–64.

See *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the exclamation *It is my secret!*..., cf. *Zohar* 3:175a (*Piq*). For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, note 21.

27. **When Isaiah saw this...** He had uttered the verse that Rabbi Shim'on has been expounding. (See above at note 21.) The prophet then taught certain devoted Israelites how to engage in sexual union in a holy manner.

According to the simple sense of the verse in Isaiah, *the children whom YHVH has given me as signs and portents* are most likely Isaiah's own children, who bear symbolic names (see Isaiah 7:3; 8:1–4). A midrashic tradition identifies *the children* with Isaiah's disciples (see *Bereshit Rabbah* 41[42]:3 and parallels). But here, Rabbi Shim'on understands *the children* as referring to children engendered by the sanctified Israelites, who are now considered as Isaiah's own: *whom YHVH has given me*.

28. **with the Ark of the holy covenant going before them...** As described in Joshua 3–4. The "celestial singers" are angels.

29. **and be uprooted once from the land...** When the First Temple was destroyed.

Because their descendants persisted in betraying God—as indicated by the duplication at the end of the verse: *with treachery the treacherous have betrayed*—the Second Temple was destroyed as well and the people were uprooted. See above, note 26.

30. ***Take this book of teaching...*** In addressing the Israelites, Moses uses the forms אלהיכם (*eloheikhem*), *your God*, or אלהיך (*elohekha*), *your God*, both alluding to *Shekhinah*, who accompanies Her people Israel. He does not normally say אלהינו (*eloheinu*), *our God*, which would include the higher rung of *Tif'eret*, attained by Moses alone.

Cf. above, pp. 692–93, nn. 99, 101, 103. The full verse in Exodus 3 (whose setting is the Burning Bush) reads: *He said, "Do not come any closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place* אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קדש הוא (*asher attah omed alav admat qodesh hu*), *on which you stand is holy ground* [or: *land*]." Here, Rabbi Yehudah construes *admat qodesh, holy ground*, as *holy land*—alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is also called *land of the living*. He reads the clause *asher attah omed alav* with a different sense of the preposition: *above which you stand*—alluding to how Moses, symbolizing *Tif'eret*, is situated above *Shekhinah*. If this was so already at the

Burning Bush, all the more so later in Moses' career and especially toward the end of his life.

The full verse in Deuteronomy (spoken by Moses to the Levites) reads: *Take this book of teaching and place it alongside the Ark of the Covenant of YHVH your God, and it shall be there as witness against you*.

On the verse in Exodus, see above, pp. 673–74, n. 44; *Zohar* 2:222a. On the phrase *land of the living*, see also, e.g., Isaiah 38:11.

31. ***it shall be there as witness against you…*** The subject is named at the beginning of the verse (*this book of teaching*), but Rabbi Yose identifies it as the Song of Moses, or the Song of *Ha'azinu* (Deuteronomy 32:1–43).

The "three that stood in testimony" are Isaac's well, the lot (by which the Promised Land was apportioned to the Israelite tribes), and the stone set up by Joshua (commemorating the pact between Israel and God).

On the Song of Moses as the subject of *and it shall be there as witness*, see Naḥmanides on Deuteronomy 31:26. For the full verse, see the preceding note.

32. **If so, there are four** That is, if the Song of Moses is included as a *witness*, then there are four "that stood in testimony"—and not three, as Rabbi Yose just said.

33. **as for the lot…** The biblical description of the lot does not include any mention of *witness* or testimony.

34. **How do we know this about Isaac's well?…** The well's association with testimony appears explicitly in the verse, which is actually spoken by Abraham to Abimelech: *He said, "Now, the seven ewes you shall take from my hand, so that it* [or: *they*] *may serve me as witness that I have dug this well.*" According to the simple sense of the verse, the antecedent of *so that it may serve* is the gift of *the seven ewes*; but Rabbi Yose construes *it* as referring to the well. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:5; Rashi on Genesis 21:30.

On the identification of Abraham's well(s) with Isaac's well(s), see Genesis 26:18: *Isaac dug anew the wells of*

water that had been dug in the days of Abraham, his father, which the Philistines had blocked up after Abraham's death; and he gave them names like the names his father had called them.

35. **על פי (*Al pi*), *By the mouth of, the lot…*** The full verse reads: על פי הגורל (*Al pi ha-goral*), *According to the lot, shall its inheritance be apportioned, whether many or few*. But based on a midrashic (and hyperliteral) reading, *al pi ha-goral* now means *by the mouth of the lot*, alluding to a miracle: the lot declared (or "testified") which territorial share would go to each tribe.

See *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 6: "Miraculous acts occurred in connection with the lot.… As it came up, the lot would cry out, 'I am the lot of such-and-such a tribe, and I have come up to assign him such-and-such a territory!' How do we know that the lot spoke? Because it is written: על פי (*Al pi*), *By the mouth of, the lot* [*shall its inheritance be apportioned*]." See above, p. 599 at n. 294; Vol. 8, pp. 145–46, n. 265.

36. **Joshua's stone…** The full verse in Joshua reads: *Joshua said to all the people, "Look, this stone shall be witness against us, for it has heard all YHVH's words that He spoke to us, and it shall be witness against you, lest you deny your God."*

37. ***It shall be there as witness against you…*** This and the earlier verse in the same chapter indicate that the Song of Moses testifies.

See above, note 31. For the full text of Deuteronomy 31:26, see above, note 30. Deuteronomy 31:21 reads in full: *It shall be, when many evils and troubles befall them, that this song shall testify before them as witness, for it shall not be forgotten in the mouth of their seed. For I know their devisings that they do today before I bring them into the land that I vowed*.

38. ***Moses wrote the words of this song…*** Why doesn't the verse read more simply: *Moses wrote this song*?

And why, *to their very end?* Isn't that obvious? Why would Moses ever not do so?

The full verse actually reads: *Moses spoke* [not *wrote*] *in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song to their very end*.

39. **All these words that Moses spoke…** The verse specifies *the words of this song* because each of these words—already engraved with the Divine Name—came before Moses to then be engraved by him, until the process was completed to the *very end*.

40. ***the words of this song…*** The explicit mention of *the words* alludes to their divine origin and speaker.

Similarly, the opening verse of the Song of Songs—*The Song of Songs, which is Solomen's*—alludes to the Divine King (symbolized by King Solomon) who uttered this song (along with *Shekhinah*). In the verse from Psalm 92, *the Sabbath day* alludes to *Tif'eret*, who chanted this *psalm* for *Shekhinah*.

According to *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3, the Sabbath day itself recited this psalm together with Adam. Cf. the Sabbath morning liturgy: "The Sabbath day exclaims in praise: *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath Day. It is good to praise YHVH*." Here, Rabbi Abba construes ליום השבת (*le-yom ha-shabbat*), *for the Sabbath day* as *by the Sabbath day*—that is, by the blessed Holy One, who is symbolized by this day. See *Zohar* 1:60a; 3:79b; *ZḤ* 17b (*MhN*).

41. **There, שיר (*shir*), *song*…** The verse in Song of Songs (like numerous passages from the Prophets) employs the masculine form, שיר (*shir*), *song*; whereas the Song of Moses has the feminine: שירה (*shirah*), *song*. The masculine form *shir* corresponds to the Divine Male, *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*); whereas the feminine form *shirah* corresponds to the lower rung, *Shekhinah*. But if so, how could the prophets utter the higher form, *shir*, and Moses utter the lower form: *shirah*?

The comparison of ape to human appears in rabbinic sources. See BT *Bava Batra* 58a, in the name of Rabbi

Bana'ah: "Compared with Sarah, all others are like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Eve, Sarah was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Adam, Eve was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with *Shekhinah*, Adam was like an ape compared with a human." See above, p. 274, n. 85; page 718. On the contrast between the forms *shir* and *shirah*, see above, pp. 421–22, nn. 412–13.

42. **how do we know that [*shirah*] is feminine?...** Because in the verse from Deuteronomy the verb, subject, and adjective are all feminine.

43. **Moses did not speak for himself...** He was on the rung of *Tif'eret* (corresponding to the masculine form *shir*), but he uttered this song for the sake of Israel; so he used the feminine form, *shirah*—corresponding to *Shekhinah*, who is closely connected to Her people. Cf. above, note 30.

44. **Not so!...** Rabbi Shim'on offers a different explanation of why Moses uttered *shirah*, rather than *shir*. Moses was ascending from the realm of *Shekhinah* to his rung, *Tif'eret*, so he imitated the *shirah* ("song" of praise) sung by *Shekhinah* to King *Tif'eret*. Conversely, the prophets descended —that is, they occupied the lower rung of *Shekhinah*—so they imitated the *shir* (song) sung by *Tif'eret* to *Shekhinah*.

The phrase השירה הזאת (*ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song*, now implies "the song sung by *Shekhinah*," who is known as זאת (*zot*), "this." On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7. On *Matronita* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary. On Moses offering *shirah*, see *Zohar* 2:54b; above, pp. 421–22, nn. 412–13.

The formulation "One progresses in holiness" derives from a rabbinic principle: "One raises [or: progresses, increases, promotes] in holiness, and does not lower." In its original context, this principle means that one should progress from a lesser to a greater degree of holiness and not the reverse, or that a person may be promoted to a higher or more dignified level but not demoted. See M

Sheqalim 6:4; BT *Berakhot* 28a; see above, pp. 60–61, n. 23.

45. ***This song shall testify…*** It would seem more logical for the verse to read *These words shall testify*. However, השירה הזאת (*ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, who will Herself *testify* against Israel and execute Judgment if they act corruptly. Perceiving this, Moses joined words "to this place," namely to *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Job reads: *Heaven will expose his sin, and earth will rise up against him*. Here, *earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who *will rise up against* a sinner. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:56a, 85b; 3:23b, 64a, 101a, 299a.

For the full text of Deuteronomy 31:21, see above, note 37. Deuteronomy 31:29 reads in full: *For I know that, after my death, you will surely act ruinously and swerve from the way that I enjoined upon you, and the evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do evil in the eyes of YHVH, infuriating Him with the work of your hands*.

46. ***Heaven will expose his sin*—and no more…** *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *heaven*) *will* only *expose* a person's sin, but *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *earth*) *will rise up against him*.

47. ***David spoke to YHVH the words of* השירה הזאת (*ha-shirah ha-zot*), *this song*…** Although David is associated with *Shekhinah*, toward the end of his life (after God had saved him from *all his enemies*), he rose higher and was now able to imitate the *shirah* sung by *Shekhinah* to *Tif'eret*.

The rabbinic quotation is from M *Avot* 2:4, in the name of Hillel: "Do not be sure of yourself [or: trust yourself] until the day of your death." The full verse in Samuel reads: *David spoke to YHVH the words of this song on the day that YHVH saved him from the clutches of all his enemies and from the clutches of Saul*.

48. **What is ultimate song?…** The finest offering is expressed in genuine words of prayer and in holy action. These ascend to the divine realm, stimulating its flow. By

wholehearted intention, a person can bind all the *sefirot* as one.

The expression רזא דמתניתין (*raza dematnitin*), "the mystery of our Mishnah," refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah, entirely distinct from the standard Mishnah. This alternative Mishnah, cited frequently in the *Zohar*, is apparently known only to its own circle. See *Zohar* 1:37b, 55b, 74a, 91b, 93a, 95b, 96a, 223b–224a, 252a (*Hash*); 2:5a (*MhN*), 123b; 3:57b, 61b, 75b, 77a, 78a, 285b, 292b (*IZ*), 293b (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 15b (*MhN*), 16a (*MhN*); Matt, "Matnita di-Lan." The term *matnitin* here is to be distinguished from the passages of the *Zohar* known as *Matnitin* (included in Vol. 11), on which see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 216; Gottlieb, *Meḥqarim*, 163–214.

On the significance of words and action, see *Zohar* 1:75b, 99b–100a, 115a, 220b (standard editions); 3:99a, 105a, 112b, 149a, 184a.

49. **From Moses...** He began by calling to *Shekhinah*, who is *the name of YHVH*. The verse in Leviticus—*He called to Moses*—is interpreted as meaning that *Shekhinah called to Moses*. Similarly, in the verse from Deuteronomy, the clause *do I call* implies that Moses called to *Shekhinah*.

Afterward, Moses addressed (or attained) the royal rung of *Ze'eir Anpin* (or its core, *Tif'eret*), *our God*. Then he descended to *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, who are known as *righteous and upright*. Finally, he united all the *sefirot* in the unitive realm of *Keter*—who cannot be identified or addressed directly (in the second person), so it is indicated only by the third-person pronoun *He*.

On *Keter* as *He*, see *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:79b, 129b–130a (*IR*), 134b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*). *Binah* can also be referred to as *He*; see above, p. 130, n. 234.

The passage in Deuteronomy (32:3–4) reads: *For the name of YHVH do I call. Hail greatness for our God. The Rock, His acts are perfect, for all His ways are justice. A steadfast God without wrong, righteous and upright is He*. On the

verse in Leviticus, see above, p. 552, n. 152. On the kabbalistic sense of *righteous and upright*, see *Zohar* 3:59a, 297a–b; *ZḤ* 42b, 45b, 51b, 52b.

50. **a person should arrange the praise of his Lord…** One should offer prayer from below to above, stimulating the flow of emanation from *Binah*, the depth of the well. Then he should draw this flow down through all the sefirotic rungs, and bind them all together.

The letters of the Holy Name (*YHVH*) signify the entire spectrum of *sefirot*. See above, p. 74, n. 60.

51. **better for him if he had never been created!** For this expression, see above, p. 503, n. 9. Cf. M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: "Whoever contemplates four things, better for him if he had never come into the world: what is above? what is below? what was before? and what will be after? Whoever shows no concern for the honor of his Maker, better for him if had never come into the world!"

52. **Greater is the one who responds "Amen"…** Because of its potency in the upper worlds. The response Amen draws the flow of emanation from the spring of *Binah* to King *Tif'eret*, who conveys it to *Shekhinah*.

According to the Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar, the letters of אמן (*amen*) signify the process of emanation. Apparently, א (*alef*) represents the primordial realm of *Keter*; מ (*mem*) signifies *Binah*; and נ (*nun*), *Shekhinah*. A heavenly voice affirms that the person responding "Amen" has generated the flow of blessing.

The Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, p. 165, n. 38. On the passage quoted here, see Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 14:31; Scholem.

On the significance of Amen, see above, pp. 538–39, n. 114. The quotation "Greater is the one who responds 'Amen'…" appears in BT *Berakhot* 53b, in the name of Rabbi Yose. On *mem* as signifying *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:136b; cf.

above, p. 4, n. 7; below, note 56. On *nun* as signifying *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 195, n. 27. For other interpretations of the passage from the Engraved Letters, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

53. ***Open the gates, so that a righteous nation, keeping faith…*** Drawing on a Talmudic tradition, Rabbi Yehudah construes אמונים (*emunim*), *faith*, as אמנים (*amenim*), *Amens*. A heavenly voice directs the angels to *open the gates* for Israel's prayers, as a fitting reward for Israel's having stimulated the flow of blessing to the angels.

See BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Whoever responds 'Amen' with all his might—the gates of the Garden of Eden are opened for him, as is said: *Open the gates, so that a righteous nation, keeping faith, may enter* (Isaiah 26:2). Do not read שמר אמנים (*shomer emunim*), *keeping faith*, but rather שאומרים אמן (*she-omerim amen*), *who say Amen.*"

See BT *Sanhedrin* 110b; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 20, p. 33.

54. **who was *keeping* to respond 'Amen'…** That is, who was waiting expectantly for the blesser to complete the blessing, so that he could respond "Amen." On the proper way to recite Amen, see above, p. 57, n. 9.

55. **Amen is called the spring…** This heartfelt response is associated with *Binah*, the spring of the divine flow. Rabbi Abba plays with אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*, and אמן (*amen*). The term Amen encompasses the flowing stream as well, which nourishes all, from the *world* of *Binah* above to the *world* of *Shekhinah* below. These two worlds are matched by the double *Amen* in Psalms. On the letters of Amen, see above, note 52.

The full verse in Proverbs (spoken by Wisdom) reads: *I was by him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling* [or: *intimate, confidant, artisan*]; *I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times*. According to a midrashic tradition, here Torah declares that she served as God's blueprint for Creation, or His architect.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, in the name of Rabbi Osha'ya: *"I was by Him as* אמון (*amon*), *a nursling*.... אמון (*amon*)—אומן (*umman*), *an artisan*. Torah says, 'I was the artistic tool of the blessed Holy One.' According to the custom of the world, when a mortal king builds a palace he does not build it by his own skill but rather by the skill of an architect. And the architect does not build it out of his own knowledge, but rather has parchments and tablets [with plans and diagrams] to know how to make the rooms and doors. Similarly, the blessed Holy One gazed into Torah and created the world." See above, pp. 183–84, n. 51.

In biblical Hebrew the word עולם (*olam*) means "eternity," and in the verse from Psalm 106 the simple sense of מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*) is *from eternity to eternity*, or *forever and ever*. Here, Rabbi Abba adopts the later sense of *olam*, "world," and construes the phrase as *from world to world*—that is, from the realm of *Binah* to that of *Shekhinah*.

On the construal *from world to world*, see M *Berakhot* 9:5; *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:21; *Zohar* 1:34a, 153b, 158b, 210a, 247b, 248b; 2:22a, 53b, 144a; 3:145b, 297b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342–43.

The verse in Psalms 106 reads in full: *Blessed is YHVH, God of Israel,* מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from eternity to eternity. And all the people say, "Amen, Hallelujah"* [or: *"Amen." Hallelujah*]. Rabbi Abba's quotation of *Amen and Amen* is borrowed from Psalms 41:14, which reads in full: *Blessed is YHVH, God of Israel,* מהעולם ועד העולם (*me-ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from eternity to eternity.* אמן ואמן (*Amen ve-amen*), *Amen and Amen*. On the double *Amen*, see below, note 68.

56. **א (*Alef*)—depth of the well...** Apparently alluding here to *Keter* (although "the depth of the well" often applies to *Binah*). The letter מם (*mem*) symbolizes the river of emanation, often identified with *Binah*. She is associated particularly with the final (or "closed") ם (*mem*).

Once in the entire Bible, this final ם (*mem*) appears out of place, before the end of a word, in the verse from Isaiah: לְמַרְבֵּה (*le-marbeh*), *of the increase of, dominion*. On this phenomenon, see above, p. 4, n. 7.

On the distinction between the open and closed מם (*mem*), see BT *Shabbat* 104a: "The Rabbis told Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: 'Children have now come to the house of study and said things unparalleled even in the days of Joshua son of Nun:… Open מ (*mem*) and closed ם (*mem*): open saying and sealed saying.'" See also Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *ma'amar patuaḥ*; *Bahir* 57–58 (84–86); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 148–50; above, p. 4, n. 7.

On the letters of *Amen*, see above, note 52. On the final *mem* as symbolizing *Binah*, see above, p. 4, n. 7.

57. **Extended נון (*nun*)…** The normal, bent נ (*nun*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whereas the final (or extended) letter ן (*nun*) symbolizes the union of male with female: *Shekhinah* with *Tif'eret*. The letter ו (*vav*) symbolizes *Tif'eret* Himself. The shape of the final letter ן (*nun*) is composed (approximately) of the shapes of the bent נ (*nun*) and the ו (*vav*), representing *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. All three letters—נ ו ן (*nun, vav*, final *nun*)—spell out the full name of the letter: נון (*nun*).

See *Zohar* 2:235b. On the two forms of the letter *nun*, see BT *Shabbat* 104a; *Bahir* 56 (83). On the bent נ (*nun*) as a symbol of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:147a–b (*Tos*); 2:91a, 139a, 215a, 235b; 3:66b, 155a; *ZḤ* 41c. On the straight ן (*nun*) as symbolizing the union of male and female, see above, p. 5, n. 10.

58. **In the mystery of the Mishnah…** According to this esoteric source, the letter ו (*vav*) symbolizes the divine male, *Tif'eret*; the final, extended ן (*nun*) symbolizes the union of male and female; and the shape of the normal, bent נ (*nun*), symbolizing *Shekhinah*, is included in the shape of the final, extended ן (*nun*). See the preceding note. On the phrase "the mystery of the Mishnah," cf. above, note 48.

59. **In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava…** This venerable figure taught that the letter מ (*mem*) in the word אמן (*amen*) stands appropriately for מלך (*melekh*), "king." All three letters of אמן (*amen*) stand for the phrase אל מלך נאמן (*el melekh ne'eman*), "God, faithful King." Here, these three words allude respectively to *Keter* (or *Binah*), *Binah* (or *Tif'eret*), and *Shekhinah* (who is often associated with "faith"). So the phrase spans the sefirotic spectrum: "totality of all."

See BT *Shabbat* 119b: "What is Amen? Rabbi Ḥanina said, 'אל מלך נאמן (*el melekh ne'eman*), God, faithful King.'" For various interpretations of *el melekh ne'eman*, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

60. **Anyone who hears a blessing…** If he does not concentrate on responding "Amen," he is considered to have spurned God and *will be disdained*. See above at note 52.

The verse in Samuel reads: *For those who honor Me will I honor, and those who spurn Me will be disdained*. The full verse in Malachi reads: *A son should honor his father, and a slave his master. Now if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My reverence?—said YHVH Tseva'ot to you, the priests who scorn My name*.

61. **Just as he did not open up blessings above…** By responding "Amen" and thereby stimulating the flow of blessing.

62. **The wicked of Hell…** The numerous openings of Hell face corresponding openings in Paradise. When a sinner's punishment has been completed, he is drawn outside of Hell and (it would seem) transported to a corresponding opening in the Garden of Eden.

See *Matoq mi-Devash*. According to a rabbinic tradition, Hell has seven habitations (or divisions) and seven entrances. See above, p. 182, n. 48; Vol. 5, pp. 376–77, n. 530.

63. **the last habitation, lowest of all…** A two-storey habitation, called *nethermost Sheol*. Rabbi Shim'on

associates the rare word עיפתה (*eifatah*), *gloom*, with the Aramaic word עיף (*if*), "doubled." For the verse in Exodus, *Targum Onqelos* employs *if* to render Hebrew כפול (*kaful*), *doubled*.

The biblical term שאול (*she'ol*) means "the netherworld; abode of the dead"; it is sometimes paired with אבדון (*avaddon*), "destruction, ruin." Here, Avadon is the lowest level of Hell, directly beneath Sheol. On Sheol and Avadon, see also Job 26:6. Cf. Revelation 9:11, where Avadon is the name of *the angel of the bottomless pit*.

The full verse in Job reads: *A land of gloom like darkness* [or: *A land whose light is darkness*]*—pitch-blackness and disorder—when it shines, it is like darkness*. Cf. BT *Sotah* 49a.

The full verse in Exodus describes the high priest's breastpiece, which was measured by the hand span (half a cubit): *It shall be square*, כפול (*kaful*), *doubled, a span its length and a span its width*.

64. **Whoever descends to Avadon…** From this *nethermost* division of Hell, no one leaves.

According to M *Eduyyot* 2:10, the wicked are punished in Hell for twelve months. See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17a: "Transgressors of Israel who sin with their body and transgressors of the Gentiles who sin with their body descend to Hell and are punished there for twelve months. After twelve months their body is consumed, their soul burned, and the wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous…. But as for the heretics, informers, apostates, skeptics, those who rejected Torah and denied the resurrection of the dead, those who abandoned the ways of the community, those who *spread* their *terror in the land of the living* (Ezekiel 32:23), and those who sinned and made the masses sin…: these descend to Hell and are punished there for generation after generation…. Hell will be consumed, but they will not be consumed." See *Tosefta*

Sanhedrin 13:4; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 3; *Zohar* 1:62b, 77b; 3:150a–b; above, page 182.

In the concluding sentence, the word "lost" renders אתאבִיד (*it'avid*), which plays on אבדון (*avaddon*).

65. **To that place they lower a man who scorns to respond 'Amen'...** Such a person is punished forever in the *nethermost* region of Hell. Cf. *ZḤ* 79c (*MhN, Rut*).

66. **No?...** Is it really impossible to ascend from Sheol? Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes between Sheol (from which it is possible to ascend) and the *nethermost* region, Avadon (from which no one leaves). However, even regarding Sheol, a sinner can ascend only if he already engaged in, or at least attempted, *teshuvah* in his lifetime.

See above, pages 182, 540. The full verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH puts to death and brings to life* [or: *and grants life; keeps alive*], *brings down to Sheol and raises up*.

67. ***Me they have forsaken...*** Those who forsake God and refuse to sanctify His name by responding "Amen" are punished by descending to the *broken cisterns* of Hell. On the verse in Jeremiah, see above, pages 699–700.

68. **If he sanctifies the name...** By responding genuinely with "Amen" and focusing on the name, then he will attain the ceaseless delights of *Binah*, who is known as the World that is Coming. The verse in Psalms now implies that *YHVH keeps* אמנים (*amenim*), [those who respond with] *Amens*. Cf. above, note 53.

See *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 7 (and parallels), in the name of Rabbi Yehudah: "Whoever responds 'Amen' in this world is privileged to respond 'Amen' in the world that is coming, as is said: *Blessed is YHVH, God of Israel,* מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from world to world* [or: *from eternity to eternity*]. *Amen and Amen* (Psalms 106:48; 41:14)." See above, note 55. On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279.

69. **Song draws blessing...** Songs sung to God stimulate the flow of blessing.

70. ***Make His deeds known among the nations…*** The passage continues: *declare that His name is exalted. Sing to YHVH, for He has done gloriously; let this be known* [literally: *this is known*] *in all the world!*

71. **from below to above…** Stimulating the divine flow, drawing it down, and unifying the *sefirot*.

The phrase "similarly with all of them" refers to the other instances of the biblical clause אז ישיר (*az yashir*), *then did sing*, which now are to be read as a future tense: *then will sing*, referring to the Messianic age.

Cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 48:4; Vol. 5, pp. 225–26, n. 102. The context in Numbers (21:16–18) reads: *From there to Be'er, which is the well of which YHVH said to Moses, "Gather the people, that I may give them water." Then* ישיר ישראל (*yashir yisra'el*), *did Israel sing* [or: *will Israel sing*], *this song: "Rise, O well! Sing to it! The well dug by princes, delved by nobles of the nation—with a scepter, with their staves."*

72. ***Rise, O well!…*** This is addressed to *Shekhinah*, pictured as a *well*. After ascending to unite with *Tif'eret*, She draws down sustenance for Her people, with whom She wanders in exile. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

73. ***The well dug by princes…*** Namely, by the divine parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, who engendered *Shekhinah*. The sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the patriarchs) *delved* and prepared a place for the union of the King with *Shekhinah*, which is then consummated with the divine *scepter, Yesod*. This process draws the flow from above to *Shekhinah*, and through Her to the worlds below.

The verse in Psalms reads: *Nobles of nations have gathered with the God of Abraham*. Thus it associates *nobles of the nations* with *Abraham* (and through him with Isaac and Jacob as well). On Abraham as *a noble*, based loosely on the verse in Psalms, see BT *Sukkah* 49b, *Ḥagigah* 3a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:2. On all three patriarchs as *nobles* (based on either the verses in Numbers or

Psalms), see *Zohar* 1:235a; 2:197b; 3:19b, 26a, 62a, 150a–b; *ZḤ* 50c. For the context in Numbers, see above, note 71.

74. **וממדבר (*U-mi-midbar*), *And from the desert…*** The passage is a short itinerary (Numbers 21:18–20): וממדבר (*U-mi-midbar*), *And from the desert* [or: *and from Midbar*], *to Mattanah. And from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth. And from Bamoth to the valley that is in the steppes of Moab, by the top of Pisgah looking out over the wasteland*.

Here the verse alludes to the ascent of *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as *midbar*, a *desert*, and is characterized by divine דבור (*dibbur*), "speech." She rises to *Yesod*, apparently symbolized by *Mattanah* (understood as "a gift"); and then to *Tif'eret*, apparently symbolized by *Nahaliel* (understood as "My inheritance is God"). Finally She attains *Bamoth* ("heights")—the lofty realm of the highest *sefirot*. See *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

According to a midrashic reading, *and from the desert* מתנה (*mattanah*), *to Mattanah*, implies *and from the desert—mattanah, a gift* (namely Miriam's well). See Vol. 5, pp. 134–35, n. 380.

1. ***I rose to open for my beloved…*** According to the midrashic reading of Song of Songs, these verses were spoken by the earthly Assembly of Israel to the blessed Holy One. Similarly with the earlier verse: *I was* [or: *I am*] *asleep*…. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:2: *"I am asleep, but my heart is awake*. The Assembly of Israel said before the blessed Holy One, 'Master of the Universe! *I am asleep* to the commandments [i.e., in neglect of them], *but my heart is awake* for rendering loving-kindness.'"

Here Rabbi Yehudah offers a paraphrase. During their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the people of Israel neglected (or were unable) to perform many of the *mitsvot*—especially all of those "located in the Land," that is, pertaining to the Promised Land. But their *heart was awake*, anticipating how they would perform such commandments once they entered the Land.

On the fact that many of the *mitsvot* apply only in the land of Israel, see Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25, Deuteronomy 4:5; *Zohar* 2:11b; *ZḤ* 35a. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 43b.

Rabbi Yehudah conflates Song of Songs 5:5–6. The former begins: *I rose to open for my beloved*. The latter reads in full: *I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away, was gone. My soul departed as he spoke. I sought him but did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me*. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, ad loc.

Song of Songs 5:2 reads in full: *I was* [or: *I am*] *asleep, but my heart was awake* [or: *is awake*]. *Listen! My beloved knocks:* [or: *The voice of my beloved, knocking:*] *"Open for me, my sister, my companion* [or: *my beloved*], *my dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, my locks with droplets of night."* See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:6 (and parallels); above, pp. 156–57, n. 14.

2. ***The voice of my beloved, knocking*—Moses…** His voice reprimanded Israel.

The two verses in Deuteronomy 9 read in full: *Remember, do not forget, how you infuriated YHVH your God*

in the wilderness: from the day that you came out of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against YHVH. And in Horeb you infuriated YHVH, and YHVH was incensed with you enough to destroy you.

3. **he spoke his words with love…** As demonstrated by the various verses in Deuteronomy—as well as the verse in Song of Songs, which is interpreted here as spoken by Moses to Israel.

The context in Deuteronomy 7 (verses 6–8) reads: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God. You YHVH has chosen to be for Him a treasured people among all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. Not because you are more numerous than all the peoples did YHVH desire you and choose you, for you are the fewest of all the peoples. But because of YHVH's love for you and because of His keeping the vow that He swore to your fathers He has brought you out with a strong hand and ransomed* [or: *redeemed*] *you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt*.

4. **What is written before?…** In the Song of Songs, the cited passage (*I rose to open for my beloved*…) actually follows—rather than precedes—the previously cited verse. In any case, Rabbi Yehudah explains it to mean that the people of Israel declared their readiness to receive guidance from Moses and to fulfill the commandments pertaining to the Land, but their beloved leader suddenly died before he could enter with them.

On the quotation from Song of Songs, see above, note 1. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Moses, servant of YHVH, died there in the land of Moab by the word of YHVH*.

5. ***I sought him but did not find him…*** For *Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses* (Deuteronomy 34:10).

The word "miracles" renders נמוסין (*nimosin*), "laws," derived from the Greek *nomos* ("custom, law"). In the *Zohar, nimosin* occasionally implies (and involves a play on)

נסין (*nissin*), "miracles," supernatural enactments that contravene the "laws" of nature. See *Zohar* 1:191b; 3:297b. According to *Or Yaqar*, here *nimosin* are simply the "laws" enacted by God through Moses.

6. **This refers to the blessed Holy One…** During the lifetime of Moses, the people of Israel were guided directly by God and not through any angel, as Moses had insisted. See Exodus 33:15: *If Your presence does not go* [i.e., *go with us*], *do not take us up from here!* However, after Moses died, *an angel of YHVH appeared to Joshua*, not God Himself; so the people of Israel felt that God had abandoned them, as intimated by the verse in Song of Songs:… *but my beloved had turned away, was gone*.

The context in Joshua (5:13–15) reads: *It happened when Joshua was at Jericho that he raised his eyes and saw, and look, a man was standing before him, his sword unsheathed in his hand. Joshua went toward him and said to him, "Are you ours or our enemies'?" He replied, "No, for I am the commander of YHVH's army. Now have I come!" Joshua fell on his face to the ground and prostrated himself, and he said to him, "What does my master say to his servant?" The commander of YHVH's army said to Joshua, "Remove your sandal from your foot, for the place on which you stand is holy." And Joshua did so*.

7. **all the more so, an angel…** Such an intermediate being would surely not have made Moses tremble; he demanded more.

8. ***Now have I come?…*** According to a midrashic reading, the angel's declaration—*Now have I come*—is actually a question: *Now have I come?* This is not his first appearance; he came previously in the days of Moses, who rejected him.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 97:3 (p. 1246) and parallels. For the context in Joshua, see above, note 6.

9. ***Give ear, O heavens…*** Rabbi Ḥiyya distinguishes between the parallel imperatives *Give ear* and *Hear*. The

first implies more intimacy and closeness than the second. The prophet Isaiah—who was not directly linked with King *Tif'eret*—employed the less intimate form (*Hear*) in addressing the *heavens* (which symbolize *Tif'eret*). Moses, however, who attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, sang *Give ear, O heavens*.

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 306; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 32:1; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 125; *Tanḥuma, Ha'azinu* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ha'azinu* 2. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Give ear, O heavens, that I may speak, and let the earth hear my mouth's utterances*.

10. **When Isaiah said *Hear, O heavens*...** His declaration aroused harsh powers above, whom he had to reassure by invoking God. Moses, however, spoke fearlessly.

The phrase "dazzling guardsmen" renders גרדיני טהירין (*gardinei tehirin*), on which see above, p. 507, n. 17.

11. **In the Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar...** According to this venerable source, the first five words of Moses' song allude to a Divine Name.

For various attempts to identify this Name, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The Engraved Letters of Rabbi El'azar is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, p. 165, n. 38.

12. **what distinguishes Moses from Isaiah?...** Moses employed the definite article in the word השמים (*ha-shamayim*), literally *the heavens*—alluding to "the ones well known," namely the sefirotic *heavens*: *Tif'eret*, who is called the blessed Holy One. Similarly, *the earth* refers to "the one well known," namely *Shekhinah*.

Isaiah, however, avoided the definite article since he was addressing the visible, nondivine *heavens* and *earth*. Even so, he would have been punished for daring to address the heavens, had he not invoked God.

13. ***Like an apple tree…*** According to midrashic tradition, the earthly Assembly of Israel utters these words in praise of the blessed Holy One. (See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on the verse.) Whereas all other nations are ruled by their individual heavenly princes, Israel is the personal share of the blessed Holy One.

On the heavenly princes of the nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: כתפוח (*Ke-tappuaḥ*], *Like an apricot* [or: *apple*] *tree, among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I delight to sit, and his fruit is sweet to my palate*. In biblical Hebrew, תפוח (*tappuaḥ*) probably means "apricot," whereas in later Hebrew it means "apple" (which is not native to Palestine).

14. **an apple tree is distinguished by its colors…** The white pulp, the red skin, and the green stem (or leaves).

For the midrashic interpretation of צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), *Hosts*, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 1: "What is the meaning of צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), *Hosts* (Psalms 89:9)? He is אות (*ot*), an ensign, among His צבא (*tsava*), host [or: army]. … He is *ot*, an ensign, among His holy myriads." See BT *Ḥagigah* 16a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:7; *Zohar* 1:6a; 2:232a.

15. **the blessed Holy One is *like an apple*…** Because He includes *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, which are symbolized respectively by white, red, and green. *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is *like a rose*.

Song of Songs 2:2 reads in full: כשושנה (*Ke-shoshanah*), *Like a lily* [or: *rose*], *among the thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens*. On this verse (and *Shekhinah* as *shoshanah*), see above, pp. 196–97, n. 32; p. 578, n. 237. On *shoshanah* as "lily" or "rose," see Vol. 6, p. 66, n. 33. On the sefirotic significance of the apple, see above, p. 459, n. 532.

16. ***A rose*, unspecified…** The lack of a definite article enables the term *rose* to include not only the earthly variety but also *Shekhinah*. She is embraced by the six lower *sefirot*

(*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*), pictured as six leaves. *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) contains both the qualities of *Din* and *Ḥesed*, symbolized respectively by red and white.

The description "*a rose* whose color is red and white" matches a famous European variety: *Rosa gallica versicolor* (also known as *Rosa mundi*), one of the oldest of the striped roses, whose flowers are crimson splashed on a white background. The striping varies and occasionally flowers revert to the solid pink of their parent, *Rosa gallica*. The parent was introduced to Europe in the twelfth or thirteenth century by Crusaders returning from Palestine. Both parent and sport were famous for their aromatic and medicinal qualities.

See *Zohar* 1:1a; 3:107a; Vol. 8, p. 203, n. 433. On the six leaves, see also Ibn Ezra on Song of Songs 2:1.

17. ***Under the apple tree I roused you…*** The verse may now imply that *Shekhinah* stimulated *Yesod*, who is situated beneath the triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*—symbolized by the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The full verse in Song of Songs 8 reads: *Who is this coming up from the desert, leaning on her beloved? Under the apricot tree* [or: *the apple tree*] *I roused you. There your mother conceived you, there she who bore you conceived you*.

18. **This is Jubilee** Disagreeing with his colleague, Rabbi Yose insists that here *the apple tree* symbolizes *Binah* (who is known as Jubilee).

19. **All is fine…** Both views are, in a sense, correct—since *Binah* is the source of the patriarchal triad (*Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*) and can thus be called by their name: *apple*. But even so, the apple's colors signify the sefirotic patriarchs. (See above, notes 14–15.)

20. **In what site?…** That is, how and where does *Shekhinah* become a rose? By being kissed by the King, whose *lips are roses*.

The verse in Genesis refers to Joseph, appointed as vizier over all of Egypt. The context (41:39–41) reads: *Pharaoh said to Joseph, "After God has made known to you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and upon your mouth all my people* ישק (*yishaq*), *shall kiss. By the throne alone shall I be greater than you." Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."*

The expression *upon your mouth all my people shall kiss* apparently means "by your command (by the directives you issue) all my people shall be guided," or "to your orders all my people shall submit," or "to you all my people shall pay homage." Alter renders it: *By your lips all my folk shall be guided*. Here, Rabbi Yitsḥak quotes the line as an allusion to Joseph's *sefirah, Yesod*, who nourishes all. See *Zohar* 1:196a; *ZḤ* 60a.

Song of Songs 5:13 reads in full: *His cheeks are like a bed of spices* [or: *balsam*], *towers of perfumes* [or: *of herbal spices*]. *His lips are* שושנים (*shoshanim*), *lilies, dripping liquid myrrh*. Here, for the sake of consistency and context, I have translated *shoshanim* as *roses*; see above, note 15. On *His lips are like shoshanim*, see *Zohar* 3:107a, 140b (*IR*), 295b (*IZ*).

Song of Songs 1:2 reads in full: *Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your loving is better* [or: *your caresses are better*] *than wine*.

21. **The blessed Holy One is called Heaven…** *Ze'eir Anpin* is called by this name. He includes seven *sefirot* (*Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah*, or *Binah* to *Yesod*), which are symbolized by the seven firmaments.

On Heaven as a name of the blessed Holy One, see *Bahir* 68 (100), citing 1 Kings 8:32; *Zohar* 2:85a–b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. On the firmaments, see BT *Ḥagigah* 12b: "Rabbi Yehudah said, 'There are two רקיעים (*reqi'im*), expanses [or: firmaments, heavens]….' Resh Lakish said, 'Seven, namely וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain; רקיע (*Raqi'a*), Firmament [or: Expanse]; שחקים (*Sheḥaqim*), Skies; זבול (*Zevul*), Loft; מעון

(*Ma'on*), Dwelling; מכון (*Makhon*), Site [or: Foundation]; ערבות (*Aravot*), Clouds. *Vilon* performs no function at all except entering in the morning and leaving in the evening, and renewing each day the act of Creation.'" See above, pp. 600–601, n. 297.

The *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Sava (the Elder) is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. On this library, see above, p. 165, n. 38.

22. **These are *barraitas*...** The term ברייתא (*barraita*), "external," usually refers to a Tannaitic tradition not included in the Mishnah. Here, it designates astronomical or astrological teachings that are "outside" the normal realm of discourse. See *Or Yaqar*.

23. **I have learned an outside *barraita*...** According to this source, the seven firmaments and the seven planets correspond to the seven lower sefirotic crowns.

The second sentence may mean that the *sefirot* are called by the names of the firmaments and planets, which are "equivalent" to the original sefirotic names. Alternatively, the firmaments and planets are called by their own names, which are "equivalent" to the sefirotic names. Their astronomical names conceal the divine correspondence. For various interpretations, see *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The verse in Isaiah, addressed to Babylon, reads: *Let them stand and save you—the astrologers, the stargazers, who announce, month by month* [or: *by each new moon*], *what will come upon you*. See *Zohar* 2:76a, 232a.

As mentioned in the preceding note, the word *barraita* itself means "external, outside," so the phrase "an outside *barraita*" is redundant.

24. **As for us...** Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes himself and his Companions from those who dabble in "outside" teachings on astronomy and astrology. Specifically, Rabbi

Shim'on and the Companions call the *sefirot* by their genuine names, as reflected symbolically throughout the Torah.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *Isaac dug anew the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham, his father, which the Philistines had blocked up after Abraham's death; and he gave them names like the names his father had called them*. Rabbi Shim'on applies the conclusion of the verse—*He gave them names like the names*…—to being loyal to the genuine *names* of the *sefirot*.

On the *Zohar*'s ambivalence toward the twin medieval sciences of astronomy and astrology, see *Zohar* 1:99b–100b; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 100.

25. **Matters are simple for the Companions…** They know the sefirotic significance of the firmaments and planets, and they keep this concealed.

26. **In the days of King Solomon…** Then *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) ruled in all Her glory.

According to the Midrash, just as the moon does not become full until the fifteenth day of its cycle, so it remained incomplete until the glorious reign of Solomon in the fifteenth generation from Abraham. See *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full." See above, p. 207, n. 61.

27. **that these matters may be revealed by me…** Rabbi Shim'on looks forward to revealing in the afterlife the secrets that he has long kept hidden. See below, p. 799, n. 94.

28. **as King David and King Solomon…** Who both knew the "crown" of *Shekhinah* well. Yet they each referred to Her metaphorically, concealing Her official sefirotic name: *Malkhut*. David referred to the moon (that is, *Shekhinah*) as Righteousness; and he described Her partner (*Yesod*, or *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*) as משפט (*mishpat*), "Justice." *Yesod*, the divine phallus, is often associated with the covenant of circumcision, and accordingly it is called here My Covenant.

Shekhinah and Her partner represent Thrones of Glory for *Binah*, who is pictured as the King. The verse from Psalm 89 alludes to them as *righteousness and justice*. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:122a; 3:59b, 73b, 85b 291b (*IZ*).

Yesod is also known as Righteous One, and He shares a single rung with His partner, Righteousness (*Shekhinah*). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105. On Righteous One and Righteousness, see above, p. 86, n. 93.

29. **Seven crowns…** The seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Shekhinah* are considered nine, including their divine parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. On the nine firmaments, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

30. **How long will the Companions read these words?…** From the "external" traditions of astronomy and astrology. See above, notes 22–25.

31. **put them aside…** Leave such "external" material for those who have not explored and endured the secret realm.

On the idiomatic expression "entered and emerged," see below, pp. 791–92, n. 74. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

32. **The last [of the] generation that left Egypt…** Namely (or including) the children raised by those who left Egypt. See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the Generation of the Desert as "a Generation of Knowledge," see above, p. 55, n. 4.

33. **Moses revealed this…** He uttered his song (containing numerous secrets) only on the day he died. Even then, he requested permission before speaking; and he addressed his words to the *heavens*, not directly to Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:2 records Moses speaking to the Israelites: *He said to them, "A hundred and twenty years old I am today. I can no longer go forth and come in, and YHVH has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.'"* (The idiom *go forth and come in* means here to lead forces in battle.)

According to Rabbi Yitsḥak, the word *today* implies that on that very day, Moses turned *a hundred and twenty years old* —the age at which he was to die. See *Zohar* 3:297a.

Deuteronomy 31:19 reads in full: *Now, write down this song and teach it to the Children of Israel; put it in their mouths, so that this song will be My witness against the Children of Israel*.

34. **Now, is it called a *song*?** Much of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43) consists of reprimands, so how can it be called a *song?*

35. **Just as a song is drawn by the Holy Spirit…** Just as a sacred song is inspired from above, so were these words of Moses. Consequently, his utterance is called a *song*.

36. **Why all this?…** That is, why did Moses address the heavens?

37. **Moses, Moses, why are you shaking all?…** See below, p. 849, n. 238.

1. **It has been taught** Here begins אדרא זוטא (*Idra Zuta*), *The Small Assembly*. This composition (3:287b–296b) describes the final gathering of Rabbi Shim'on and the Companions, as the master prepares to depart from this world. Now he reveals the deepest secrets concerning the various divine configurations.

The placement of *Idra Zuta* in the *Zohar*'s commentary on Torah portion *Ha'azinu* (which features the Song of Moses) indicates the parallel between the last words (and death) of Moses and those of Rabbi Shim'on. On the comparison (and contrast) between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11–42.

Copyists and editors of the *Zohar* refer to this section (and to the dramatic gathering) as *Idra Zuta* (The Small *Idra*), to distinguish it from an earlier larger gathering: *Idra Rabba* (The Great *Idra*), which appears in *Zohar* 2:127b–145a (Vol. 8, pp. 318–459).

On *Idra Zuta*, see above, page xii; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 82–84; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 89–157; Sobol, "Ḥativat ha-Idrot be-Sifrut ha-Zohar"; Asulin, "Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah"; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 158–224. On the term *idra*, see below, note 7. On depictions of the divine anatomy in Jewish mysticism, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 16–18; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 15–55.

2. **arranging his affairs…** The Aramaic phrase—מלוי מסדר (*mesadder milloi*)—can also be construed as "arranging his words," namely the secrets that he wished to reveal.

3. **The other time when I was on my sickbed…** Rabbi Shim'on had been on the verge of death—already selecting his place in Paradise—when his life was mercifully extended until now. Ever since Rabbi Shim'on "returned" to earthly life, no one has dared to enter his presence without permission.

The account of Rabbi Shim'on's earlier experience appears in *ZḤ* 18d–19a (*MhN*) and also in *Zohar* 3:309a–b (*Tosefet*). There, Rabbi Shim'on selects his place in Paradise

next to the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh (on whom see 1 Kings 11:29–39; Vol. 1, p. 24, n. 165). See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 11–12. On the fire whirling before Rabbi Shim'on, see *Zohar* 2:14a (*MhN*); cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 14b; *Zohar* 1:98b (*MhN*).

Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, a second-century rabbi who lived in Palestine, was renowned for his saintliness and ability to work miracles. In the *Zohar* he is a revered member of Rabbi Shim'on's circle. Such special recognition is to be expected since (according to BT *Shabbat* 33b) Rabbi Pinḥas was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shim'on. However, the *Zohar* elevates Pinḥas further by transforming him into Rabbi Shim'on's father-in-law. Whereas according to rabbinic literature Rabbi Pinḥas outlived Rabbi Shim'on, in the account below, Rabbi Pinḥas has already died. See above, pp. 418–19, n. 402; *Zohar* 3:144b (*IR*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:59.

4. **saw what he saw…** That is, he saw the Divine Presence, which becomes visible at death.

See *Sifra, Nedavah* 2:12, 4a, in the name of Rabbi Dosa: "Scripture states: *No human can see Me and live* (Exodus 33:20). In their lifetime they do not see, but in their death they do!" See above, p. 327, n. 104.

5. **I have been surety for him…** Years earlier, Rabbi Yitsḥak was on the verge of death when Rabbi Shim'on interceded with God and saved his life. In order to do so, Rabbi Shim'on pledged himself as surety, promising to bring Rabbi Yitsḥak along with him when his own time would come. Rabbi Yitsḥak is fortunate now to be departing the world together with his master. For the earlier episode, see *Zohar* 1:217b–218b (Vol. 3, pp. 313–18); above, p. 261, n. 46.

6. **Rabbi Shim'on rose—and sat down…** He was about to begin, but then he noticed that most of the Companions had left when "fire whirled through the house."

7. **Those Companions who were present at the threshing house…** Namely, those who participated in the earlier gathering, the *Idra Rabba* (The Great Assembly). During that event, six of the Companions proved their mystical ability and stamina, but three others died. Now the experienced Companions are invited to hear Rabbi Shim'on's final words.

The term "threshing house" renders בי אדרא (*bei iddera*). The word *iddera* means "threshing floor; barn; chamber." In *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:3, the Sanhedrin is described as אדרא דאזהרה (*iddera de-azharah*), "the threshing floor of enlightenment (or admonishment)," because the members of the Sanhedrin sat in semicircular rows, resembling half the shape of a threshing floor. See M *Sanhedrin* 4:3: "The Sanhedrin was arranged like half of a circular threshing floor so that they could see one another." See also *Targum*, Song of Songs 7:3; and cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11, where Rabbi Yoḥanan describes nighttime study as "the threshing floor of Torah."

In the titles *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zuta*, the word *idra* (technically, *iddera*) is often understood as "assembly, convocation," though the sense of "threshing place" still pertains because the Companions gather to thrash out the secrets. See the more general use of the term in *Zohar* 3:148a: "I want to walk behind you and learn some of those sublime words that you taste every day from the Holy *Idra*." Cf. the statement of David ben Judah he-Ḥasid (in *Mar'ot ha-Tsove'ot*, 116): "This secret [is clear]… to anyone who has entered the threshing house."

On the various connotations of the term *iddera*, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 93–107. Ronit Meroz has suggested that the Zoharic term derives from Greek *edra*, "sitting-place, seat, abode (especially of the gods), sanctuary, temple, session (of a council)." See Meroz, "The Story in the Zohar about the Grieving Dead," 47–51. On the passage in M *Sanhedrin*, see the eschatological description of the

threshing floor in *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:8; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:11; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 29; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:12. On the *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1.

8. **They all left...** All the others who had earlier filled the house now left, and there remained only five of the Companions who had survived the *Idra Rabba* plus the newly arrived sixth one, Rabbi Yitsḥak.

9. **I want to enter without shame...** Having revealed as much wisdom on earth as he could. Otherwise he would be departing deficiently.

On the concluding sentence, see below, note 94. On the theme of entering without shame, see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 1, p. 4; *Midrash Mishlei* 10; *Zohar* 2:123b; 3:46a, 144a (*IR*), 196b, 291a–b (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 2c (*SO*), 8d (*MhN*), 70d (*ShS*). Cf. *Zohar* 1:4a, 221b–222a; 2:134b; 3:205b.

On the tension between revealing and concealing, see above, p. 371 at n. 251; Vol. 8, pp. 320–21, n. 6.

10. **Rabbi Abba will write...** On his scribal role, see *Zohar* 2:123b; 3:296b (*IZ*).

11. **someone else...** Apparently referring to one of the souls of the righteous coming from Paradise.

12. **Rabbi Shim'on enwrapped himself...** In his cloak in preparation for revealing secrets of divinity.

This description derives from a famous rabbinic story (BT *Ḥagigah* 14b): "Once Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai was riding on a donkey, traveling on the road, and Rabbi El'azar son of Arakh was guiding the donkey behind him. He [i.e., Rabbi El'azar] said to him, 'Master, teach me one chapter of the Account of the Chariot [based on Ezekiel's vision].' He [i.e., Rabbi Yoḥanan] replied, 'Have I not taught you: "Nor [may one expound the Account of] the Chariot in the presence of one, unless he is a sage who understands on his own (M *Ḥagigah* 2:1)"?' He said to him, 'Master, permit me to say before you one thing that you have taught me.' He replied, 'Speak!' Immediately, Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai

dismounted from the donkey and enwrapped himself and sat upon a stone beneath an olive tree. He [Rabbi El'azar] said to him, 'Master, why did you dismount from the donkey?' He replied, 'Is it possible that you are expounding the Account of the Chariot, and *Shekhinah* is with us and the ministering angels accompany us, and I should ride on the donkey?' Immediately, Rabbi El'azar son of Arakh began expounding the Account of the Chariot, and fire descended from heaven and encompassed [or: intertwined with] all the trees of the field, whereupon they all opened in song…."

See *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 21:1; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77a; *Zohar* 2:95a. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 10a.

13. ***The dead do not praise Yah…*** According to a rabbinic tradition, "the wicked … even in their life are called 'dead,'" whereas "the righteous… even in their death are called 'living.'" See BT *Berakhot* 18a–b; above, p. 214, n. 82.

Dumah, literally "silence," designates the silence of death (the netherworld) in the Bible. See Psalms 94:17: *Were not YHVH a help to me, my soul would have nearly dwelt in dumah*. In rabbinic literature, Dumah is the angel in charge of souls of the dead (BT *Berakhot* 18b, *Shabbat* 152b, *Sanhedrin* 94a). In the *Zohar* he retains this role and oversees Hell.

14. **How different is this moment from the *Idra*!…** In the earlier gathering (known as *Idra Rabba*), God appeared along with the angels of His Chariot-Throne. Now, souls of the righteous accompany Him, and thereby they are honored.

Jeroboam was the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel. According to the book of Kings, he had golden calves built in Bethel and Dan to dissuade the people from going to the Temple in the southern kingdom of Judah. See 1 Kings 12:25–33. In the following chapter of Kings, a prophet from Judah comes to Bethel and prophesies the destruction of the altar. *It happened when the king heard*

the word of the man of God that he had proclaimed against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand above the altar, saying, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out against him withered, and he could not pull it back. In Kings *the man of God* is not named, but he is traditionally identified as Iddo.

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:6; *Tanḥuma, Toledot* 12; *Zohar* 2:64a; 3:156b. On Iddo, see also 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 20; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:1; BT *Sanhedrin* 89b; Rashi and Radak on 1 Kings 13:1. On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1.

15. **Rav Hamnuna Sava…** On this revered figure, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48.

According to *Zohar* 1:7b, Rabbi Shim'on had once been promised that he and Rav Hamnuna Sava would be neighbors in Paradise. According to the conclusion of the *Idra Rabba*, during that earlier assembly Rav Hamnuna Sava was elsewhere—imprisoned in a tower by edict of the royal crown. See *Zohar* 3:144b (*IR*). On the significance of Rav Hamnuna Sava's appearance in *Idra Zuta*, see Asulin, "Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah," 156–77.

The Holy Ancient One is the primordial divine realm, which soon becomes the focus of Rabbi Shim'on's teaching.

16. **Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir…** On this figure, see above, note 3.

17. **If it were as in the *Idra*…** During that earlier assembly (*Idra Rabba*), all the Companions participated in revealing secrets. Now they listen as Rabbi Shim'on expounds. On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1.

18. ***I am my beloved's…*** Rabbi Shim'on has been intimate with the blessed Holy One his whole life, so now He desires to hear Rabbi Shim'on's words. On the verse in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 1:88a–b; 3:132b (*IR*).

At the mention of "the Holy Ancient One," Rabbi Shim'on immediately begins to describe this indescribable realm. It is separate from all things, yet linked to each one.

It took on form to generate existence; yet although manifested, it cannot be found.

The term the Holy Ancient One often refers to *Keter*; but in the *Idra Zuta*, it includes both *Ein Sof* and *Keter*. See Scholem; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:245. In the following, I alternate between the pronouns "It" and "He" when referring to the Holy Ancient One, depending on the context.

19. **When arrayed, it produces nine radiancies…** The Holy Ancient One generates nine lights, the essences (or origins) of the nine lower *sefirot*. These convey aspects of Divinity, serving as its Name. Yet although the lights seem to be distinct rays, ultimately they have no existence independent of their source, which cannot be grasped on its own. Their apparent separateness is an optical illusion.

On the nine lights, see *Zohar* 1:65a; 2:226a, 269a; Scholem. Cf. *ZḤ* 104c (*Tiq*), 121d (*Mat*). On the parable of the lamp, see below at notes 103–5; Moses de León, Commentary on the Ten *Sefirot*, 377b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:239–40. On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

20. **what our colleagues have said…** Namely, that these nine radiancies are תקונין (*tiqqunin*), enhancements, of the Holy Ancient One, through which He reveals Himself in the corresponding nine *sefirot* (from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*).

Rabbi Shim'on says that he already discussed these matters in the *Idra Rabba*, where, in fact, the thirteen *tiqqunin* of the Holy Ancient One figure prominently. See, e.g., *Zohar* 3:131a (*IR*), 134b (*IR*). He then refers to a discovery that he has kept hidden, which he will now reveal in the presence of God and the souls of the virtuous from Paradise.

The semantic range of the word תקונא (*tiqquna*)—Hebrew תקון (*tiqqun*)—includes: "mending, improvement, correction, perfection, restoration, alignment, preparation, order, arrangement, array, adornment, equipment, enhancement,

configuration." The term *tiqquna* figures prominently in both *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zuta*. See below, note 51; Vol. 8, p. 320, n. 5.

21. **The white skull of the Head...** Of the Holy Ancient One. This boundless skull is like a colander, dripping its aromatic sustenance. Each day, the vivifying dew of emanation trickles from this skull to the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, which is called *Ze'eir Anpin*. The core of *Ze'eir Anpin, Tif'eret*, is symbolized by "heaven." *Ze'eir Anpin*'s head is filled with dew, which also reaches *Shekhinah* (known as the Apple Orchard).

The phrase "a colander of its balsam" renders דקטפוי קולטרא (*qultera de-qitpoi*). The neologism *qultera* signifies here some type of vessel, and it may be based on Castilian *coladero*, "colander, sieve"; or on Aramaic קולתא (*qulta*), "pitcher." *Qitpa* means "resin, sap, balsam." For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Derekh Emet*; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189; *Ma'arikh*, s.v. *qltr*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 43, n. 52. Cf. *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*); Vol. 5, p. 552, n. 14.

According to a rabbinic tradition, the righteous will be rewarded with 310 worlds in the afterlife, based on the numerical value of the word יש (*yesh*), "substance," in the verse *To endow my lovers with* יש (*yesh*), *substance, filling their storehouses* (Proverbs 8:21). Here the number is increased to 400. See M *Uqtsin* 3:12; *Avot* 5:19; Vol. 8, p. 328, n. 24. On the term "worlds of yearning," see above, p. 32, n. 82.

The motif of dew reviving the dead appears in *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Yehudah said, '... In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead....' Rabbi Tanḥum said, '... From where does it descend? From the head of the blessed Holy One. In the time to come, He will shake the hair of His head and bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is

said: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake…. For my head is filled with dew* (Song of Songs 5:2).’” See Vol. 8, pp. 328–29, n. 25.

On emanation as dew, and on *Shekhinah* as the Apple Orchard, see above, p. 459, n. 532. On the dew dripping from the Holy Ancient One to *Ze’eir Anpin* to *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:61b, 84b, 88a; 3:128b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*). The full verse in Genesis reads: *May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, abundance of grain and new wine*.

The term זעיר אנפין (*ze’eir anpin*) means “short-tempered, irascible, impatient,” taking a short time for one’s nostrils to flare (deriving from Proverbs 14:17). The contrasting term אריך אנפין (*arikh anpin*) means “slow to anger; long-suffering; forbearing; patient,” taking a long time for one’s nostrils to flare (deriving from Exodus 34:6). See Ibn Ezra (short), ad loc.

In the *Zohar*, the term *Arikh Anpin* is applied to the highest sefirotic configuration, corresponding to *Keter* and characterized by pure compassion. In *Idra Zuta*, the following two *sefirot*—*Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*—are designated as Father and Mother, who engender the next configuration (from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). This next sefirotic cluster is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to *Arikh Anpin* (the Long-suffering One), this configuration is called *Ze’eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One). Whereas in *Idra Rabba Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* are not described separately and are included in *Ze’eir Anpin*, in *Idra Zuta* the term *Ze’eir Anpin* is generally applied to the configuration from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, although sometimes it includes *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

The terms *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze’eir Anpin* are sometimes understood respectively as “the Large (or Vast) Countenance” and “the Small Countenance.” (See Vol. 8, p. 324, n. 14.) On *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze’eir Anpin*, see also Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:245–46, 426–27; Idel, *Ben: Sonship*

and Jewish Mysticism, 417–25. On the distinction between the scope of *Ze'eir Anpin* in *Idra Rabba* and in *Idra Zuta*, see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 51. In *Idra Zuta*, the name *Arikh Anpin* is normally replaced by "the Holy Ancient One."

22. **concealed supernal Wisdom is found and is not found…** This root of the *sefirah Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) is within the skull of the Holy Ancient One, but it cannot be precisely determined or known. It is identified with the Concealed Brain.

23. **Three heads are engraved…** Rabbi Shim'on begins his description of the three heads of the Holy Ancient One from the lowest (or innermost) one: Concealed Wisdom (or the Concealed Brain), the root of *Ḥokhmah*.

On the three heads, see the following note; *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:245–46; Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth*, 75–77; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 43–46. Cf. the image of three brains, above, pp. 677–78, n. 52; below, note 138.

24. **The Supernal Head is the Holy Ancient One…** The second head of the Holy Ancient One is called by His very name; this corresponds to *Keter*. The highest (or most expansive) head—corresponding to *Ein Sof*—is unknowable, even to the *sefirot Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

These three heads can be pictured concentrically as the (concealed) brain, the encompassing cranium (the second head), and the boundless head of *Ein Sof*. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Bei'urei ha-Gera*; *Yafah Sha'ah*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 44.

The paradoxical name *Ayin* (Nothingness) alludes to the Holy Ancient One's undifferentiated and incomprehensible nature: no-thingness. See above, p. 22, n. 57; Matt, *"Ayin."*

The concluding clause—"since *Ayin* depends upon it"—implies that the term *Ayin* pertains to a specific realm within

the Holy Ancient One. See Gottlieb, *Meḥqarim*, 177. Cf. *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The verse in Numbers (originally spoken by King Balak to Balaam) now implies that one should *flee* from inquiring about this head. Cf. *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:8: "If your mind races, return למקום (*la-maqom*), to the place [or: to the Place (i.e., the Omnipresent)]." On this enigmatic wording, see Hayman, *Sefer Yeṣira*, 73.

The full verse in Ezekiel (describing the angelic beings carrying the divine Chariot-Throne) reads: *The living beings darting back and forth like a flash of lightning*. Here, that flurry of activity alludes to fleeting comprehension. Both verses are also quoted in *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*).

The notion that *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* cannot comprehend the highest head parallels the statement in the Gnostic *Gospel of Truth* (22:27–29), according to which the aeons (divine emanations) below *Nous* (Intellect) are unaware of the hidden divinity: "It was quite amazing that they were in the Father without knowing Him." See Vol. 8, p. 337, n. 47.

25. **All those hairs and all those strands...** The hairs on the head of the Holy Ancient One are smooth, signifying Compassion. They cover the nape of the neck, concealing its quality of Judgment. Such constant Compassion is characteristic of the Holy Ancient One. See *Zohar* 3:128b–129a (*IR*).

26. **It is found in thirteen...** The Holy Ancient One is enhanced by thirteen *tiqqunin*. (See above, note 20; below, note 51.) These thirteen enhancements are associated with the thirteen attributes of Compassion, which are derived from two biblical passages (in Exodus and Micah).

The more prevalent list of the attributes of Compassion appears in Exodus 34:6–7, which reads in full: *YHVH passed before his face and called out, "YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*], *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*] *and truth* [or: *faithfulness*], *keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, removing*

iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations." See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17b. Cf. Micah 7:18–20; *Zohar* 3:131a (*IR*).

Rabbi Shim'on explains the number thirteen as the sum of three-times-four divisions of Concealed Wisdom plus the Holy Ancient One Himself. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

27. **One path shining in the middle of the hairs…** In the parting of the hair. See below at note 145, and *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*), which specifies a total of "613 paths, diverging in *Ze'eir Anpin*."

The verse in Isaiah is construed here hyperliterally: *Then you will delight* על (*al*), *above, YHVH*—that is, *above Tif'eret*, who is known as *YHVH*.

The context in Isaiah (58:13–14) reads: *If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from engaging in your affairs on My holy day, and call the Sabbath "delight," the holy of YHVH "honored"; if you honor it by not going your own ways, pursuing your affairs, or speaking a word, then you will delight* על (*al*), *upon* [or: *in*], *YHVH, and I will cause you to ride upon the heights of the earth, and feed you the inheritance of your father Jacob—for the mouth of YHVH has spoken*. The phrase *speaking a word* may refer to idle, mundane, or excessive talk, discussing business, or legal proceedings. On the hyperliteral reading *above YHVH*, see above, p. 557, n. 168. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *The path of the righteous is like gleaming light, shining ever brighter until full day*.

28. **סבא דסבין (*Sava de-Savin*), Eldest of Elders…** Playing on the philosophical formula סבת הסבות (*sibbat ha-sibbot*), based on Latin *causa causarum*, "cause of causes," the ultimate ground of being. (In acknowledgment of this allusion, I have included the title "Origin of Origins.") The Holy Ancient One is the source of the lower nine sefirotic crowns or lamps.

On the allusion to *sibbat ha-sibbot*, see *Zohar* 1:22a (*TZ*), 72b; 2:205a; 3:128b (*IR*); *ZḤ* 48b–c; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 4 (6–7); Scholem, *Über einige Grundbegriffe des Judentums*, 50.

29. **This Ancient One exists with three heads…** All included in the highest. See above, notes 23–24.

The threefold nature of the Holy Ancient One is recapitulated in the triadic arrangement of the following *sefirot*: *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Da'at*; *Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tif'eret*; and *Netsaḥ, Hod, Yesod*. On *Da'at*, see below, note 62.

30. **the Holy Ancient One is marked by two…** Apparently referring to *Keter* and *Ein Sof*.

See above, note 18. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:243; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The twofold nature of the Holy Ancient One is reflected in the polar opposites right and left, which characterize the sefirotic structure. The concluding clause can also be rendered: "all the other lamps are concealed in twos."

31. **the Ancient One is marked and concealed by one…** The unity of the Holy Ancient One is reflected in the unity of the sefirotic lamps.

32. **The forehead…** Here is manifested the Divine רצון (*ratson*), "Will" (or "Favor"), which is pictured as a potentate issuing from the highest of the three heads and "included in the forehead." Once this potent Will is revealed, prayers are accepted, the harshness of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) is assuaged, and Compassion prevails.

The term "potentate" renders טורנא (*turana*), "governor, ruler," which probably derives from Greek *tyrannos*, "absolute ruler, tyrant." See, e.g., *Targum Yonatan*, Judges 16:5; *Zohar* 1:164a. The word "luster" renders בוסיטא (*bosita*), a neologism that apparently refers here to a luster or ray of light, playing on בוסינא (*bosina*), "lamp, spark." Based on the references to "forehead," "luster," and *ratson*, there may be an allusion here to the ציץ (*tsits*), "medallion" (or

“plate, rosette”), a gold plate worn on the forehead of the high priest over his turban, bearing the inscription קדש ליהוה (*qodesh la-YHVH*), *Holy to YHVH* (Exodus 28:36). A few verses later (Exodus 28:38), the *tsits* is associated with the word רצון (*ratson*): *It shall be upon his forehead perpetually* לרצון להם (*le-ratson la-hem*), *for their acceptance* [or: *to win acceptance* (*or favor*) *for them*], *before YHVH*. See *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 335, n. 41; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 134–35. On *bosita*, see also Vol. 5, p. 556, n. 22; Vol. 8, p. 356, n. 123; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *besit*.

On the three heads, see above, notes 23–24. On the forehead of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*), 293a (*IZ*). On the term *Ze’eir Anpin*, see above, note 21.

33. **at the time of *minḥah*…** The afternoon service. Usually, the afternoon and the approach of evening are a time of Judgment, but on Sabbath afternoon the divine forehead is revealed and all harsh powers of Judgment are subdued.

The association of Sabbath afternoon with רצון (*ratson*), “will, favor,” accords with the medieval custom of reciting Psalms 69:14 during the Sabbath *minḥah: As for me, may my prayer to You, O YHVH, come at a time of ratson, favor. O God, in Your abundant kindness, answer me with Your sure deliverance*.

The tranquility of Sabbath extends even to Hell, where the wicked are allowed to rest. According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5, one of the dwellers in Hell reports: “Whoever does not observe the Sabbath willingly in your world observes it here against his will…. All week long we are punished and on the Sabbath we are granted rest.”

On the association of the time of *minḥah* with Judgment, see above, p. 1, n. 3. On the assuagement of Judgment at the time of *minḥah* (and on the verse in Psalm 69), see *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*); Vol. 8, pp. 335–36, n. 42. On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see BT *Sanhedrin* 65b; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa*

33; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23, 120a; *Zohar* 1:14b, 17b, 41a (*Heikh*), 48a, 62b, 197b, 237b; 2:31b, 88b, 100a, 130a, 136a, 150b–151a, 203b, 207a; 3:94b, 105a, 145a (*IR*); *ZḤ* 17a–b (*MhN*), 79b (*MhN*).

34. **a soul of joy is added on Sabbath…** Each person observing the Sabbath is endowed with an additional soul, which enables him to relish all three Sabbath meals.

See BT *Beitsah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "On Sabbath eve the blessed Holy One imparts an additional soul to a human being. When Sabbath departs it is taken from him." See above, p. 144, n. 280.

The three Sabbath meals (on Friday night, Sabbath noon, and Sabbath afternoon) are associated with three divine configurations (as explained below), spanning all of the *sefirot*—the entire realm of faith. Cf. the rabbinic notion that the observance of Sabbath is equivalent to fulfilling the entire Torah. See JT *Berakhot* 1:4, 3c; Vol. 5, p. 379, n. 538.

On the three Sabbath meals, see *Mekhilta*, *Vayassa* 4; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 16:25; BT *Shabbat* 117b–118b; *Zohar* 2:88a–b; 3:94b; *ZḤ* 48c; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1234–36. On the phrase "entirety of faith," see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 118.

On the connection between a person's additional Sabbath soul and his appetite, see Rashi on BT *Beitsah* 16a and especially *Ta'anit* 27b, s.v. *neshamah yeteirah*.

35. **I have never neglected these three meals…** Due to Rabbi Shim'on's lifelong devotion to these special meals, he never experienced a bad dream on the night of Sabbath—nor, in fact, on any night. Consequently, he never had to fast on Sabbath day, in order to avert the fulfillment of any foreboding dream.

See BT *Shabbat* 11a: "Rava son of Meḥasia said in the name of Rav Ḥama son of Goria in the name of Rav: 'Fasting is as fine for [annulling] a dream as fire for tow [short or broken fibers combed off flax].' Rav Ḥisda said, 'If it is on the same day.' Rav Yosef said, 'Even on Sabbath.'"

One who succeeds in celebrating all three meals will eventually attain the entire divine domain of faith, since each meal is in honor of one of the three sefirotic configurations: *Shekhinah* (or *Matronita*) on Friday night, *Ze'eir Anpin* at Sabbath noon, and the Holy Ancient One on Sabbath afternoon. Whoever rejoices in all three meals week by week proves worthy of experiencing the corresponding divine realms in the afterlife.

On various correspondences between the meals and the *sefirot*, see *Zohar* 2:88b; *ZḤ* 48c; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 16:25; idem, *Shulḥan shel Arba*, 482; Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei Luḥot ha-Berit, Massekhet Shabbat*, 102a–b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1234–35; Wolfson, intro to *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 53–55.

On Rabbi Shim'on's devotion to the Sabbath meals, see *Zohar* 3:95a (Vol. 8, p. 107, nn. 158–59). On the common neglect of these three meals, see BT *Shabbat* 118b; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 178; *Tosafot, Bekhorot* 2b, s.v. *shemma*. On the passage in BT *Shabbat* (quoted above), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:12; BT *Ta'anit* 12b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:3; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 2; *Zohar* 3:89b, 92a, 105a–b.

36. **When this Will is revealed...** When the Will of the Holy Ancient One is revealed (as, for example, on Sabbath afternoon), all harsh powers are illumined and immediately subdued.

37. **The enhancement of the Holy Ancient One...** It is arrayed in Concealed Wisdom (or the Concealed Brain), which is the third of the Holy Ancient One's three heads. This Wisdom is the source of all lower wisdoms, beginning with the *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). Concealed Wisdom is also called "supernal Eden," whereas *Ḥokhmah* is called simply "Eden."

On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, note 20. On the three heads of the Holy Ancient One, see

above, notes 23–24. On the two Edens, see *Zohar* 3:129b (*IR*), below at note 65; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 98a–b. On other senses of upper and lower Eden, see *Zohar* 2:178b (*SdTs*), 210b; 3:182b; *ZḤ* 18a (*MhN*); cf. *ZḤ* 13c (*MhN*).

38. **that concealed head in the head of the Holy Ancient One…** The highest head, corresponding to *Ein Sof*, extends a potency (or "potentate"), which strikes the Concealed Brain, generating the Will. This Will extends into the beard of the Holy Ancient One.

On the term rendered as "potentate," see above, note 32. On the beard of the Holy Ancient One, see below, note 50. On Supernal *Ḥesed*, see *Zohar* 2:48b–49a; 3:138b (*IR*); Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 223; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 214, n. 196. Cf. *Zohar* 3:133b (*IR*).

39. **The eyes of the head of the Holy Ancient One…** His two eyes function (and are considered) as one, since in the realm of the Holy Ancient One there is only Compassion (symbolized by right) and no Judgment (symbolized by left). This "single" eye watches over the world constantly, so it is not covered.

In the verse from Psalms, *Israel* now alludes to *Ze'eir Anpin*, whose core is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). On the eye(s) of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:129b–130a (*IR*).

40. **three whites of the eye…** Of the Holy Ancient One. The eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin* are bathed in this milky whiteness, which also bathes and illumines the sefirotic lamps of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

See *Zohar* 3:129b–130a (*IR*), 136b–137a (*IR*), 293b (*IZ*). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His eyes are like doves by streams of water, bathing in milk, sitting by a brimming pool*. See *Zohar* 2:122b, 177b (*SdTs*); 3:136b (*IR*).

41. **The brain is called 'fountain of blessing'…** The Concealed Brain provides all blessing.

The verse in Proverbs reads: *He that has a good* [or: *generous*] *eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of*

his bread to the poor. Rabbi Shim'on is alluding to a Talmudic interpretation of this verse. See BT *Sotah* 38b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "We give the cup of blessing for the recital of Grace after Meals only to one who has a generous eye, as is said: *He that has a generous eye* יְבֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. Do not read *yevorakh, will be blessed*, but rather יְבָרֵךְ (*yevarekh*), *will bless*." See above, p. 260, n. 42; *Zohar* 3:129b–130a (*IR*).

42. **When this eye gazes upon *Ze'eir Anpin*...** When the eye of the Holy Ancient One gazes upon *Ze'eir Anpin*, the latter's harshness is assuaged and the worlds rejoice. The "single" eye of the Holy Ancient One manifests only Compassion (symbolized by right), not Judgment (symbolized by left), whereas *Ze'eir Anpin* below has two distinct eyes.

See above, note 39; *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*); *Zohar* 3:15a–b, 130a, 136b–137b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*), 293b (*IZ*). On the interplay between *Arikh Anpin* (or the Holy Ancient One) and *Ze'eir Anpin*, see also Hellner-Eshed, "Refu'at ha-Panim."

43. **the Concealment of the Book...** Referring to *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment). See *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdTs*); Vol. 5, pp. 559–62, nn. 33–38.

In the realm of *Ze'eir Anpin*, the (lower) letters י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*) symbolize respectively *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at* (or *Tif'eret*). In the realm of the Holy Ancient One, the (higher) letters represent roots, or primordial forms, of these *sefirot*. These subtle roots are said to be "dependent" on the Holy Ancient One, whereas the more fully formed letters are "actually there" in *Ze'eir Anpin*. The subtle letters are dependent on the Holy Ancient One in order to enable the lower letters to exist in *Ze'eir Anpin*.

"The name of the Ancient One" likely refers to יהו (*YHV*), which is composed of the three consonants of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). On this shorter name, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:13; *Zohar* 2:126b–127a, 176b (*SdTs*); Scholem, *Origins of the*

Kabbalah, 31–33. On the name of the Holy Ancient One's being concealed, see *Zohar* 3:130a (*IR*).

The reversed title (the Concealment of the Book) appears frequently in *Idra Rabba*, yet only here in *Idra Zuta*. On the relation between the *Idrot* and *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 95–101; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 98–99. On the triad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*, see below, note 62.

44. **Therefore the Holy Name is concealed and revealed...** This may refer to the idea that the name יהוה (*YHVH*), representing a more hidden realm, is not pronounced as it is written, but rather as the more "revealed" name אדני (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which refers to a more revealed *sefirah* (*Shekhinah*), who is Herself "dependent on *Ze'eir Anpin*."

The concluding sentence refers to the standard formula of blessing: "Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the world, who has sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to..." According to Rabbi Shim'on, the opening of the blessing (mentioning "You") alludes to the more revealed aspect of God, which can be addressed directly in the second person; whereas the continuation of the blessing (employing the third person) alludes to the Holy Ancient One, who must be spoken of more indirectly. In grammatical terminology, the third-person construction is known as נסתר (*nistar*), "concealed." See above, p. 252, n. 20; below, note 65.

See *Bahir* 125 (184); Naḥmanides on Exodus 15:26; Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, p. 135, n. 2; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. On God's name being both concealed and revealed, see above, p. 27, n. 67. For various interpretations of how this principle applies here, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

45. **To sustain י (*yod*) below** Alluding to *Ḥokhmah* in the realm of *Ze'eir Anpin*. See above, note 43.

46. **The nose…** Through the nose of the Holy Ancient One (pictured as a cabinet), breath blows to *Ze'eir Anpin*. The letter ה (*he*), suspended in the nostril, alludes to the root of *Binah* within the Holy Ancient One, which sustains *Binah* below.

"Breath" renders רוחא (*ruḥa*), "wind, breath, spirit." The full verse in Isaiah reads: רוח (*Ruaḥ*), *The spirit* [or: *breath*] *of, YHVH will alight upon him: a breath of wisdom and understanding, a breath of counsel and power, a breath of knowledge and awe of YHVH*.

"Armoire" renders פרדשקא (*pardashqa*), apparently based on the rabbinic term פרדסקין (*pardisqin*), a corruption of Greek *purgiskos*, "cupboard, cabinet." See M *Oholot* 6:7; *Tosefta Oholot* 7:13; Lieberman, *Tosefet Rishonim*, 3:115. On the word *pardisqin* in M *Oholot*, the early thirteenth-century Tosafist Samson of Sens explains to his readers what a cabinet is: "hollow columns in the wall of the house made of many windows and with doors." Asher ben Yeḥiel explains that *pardisqin* are "windows like towers built into the wall." Some commentators understand *pardashqa* as "officer," based on the rabbinic term פרדשכא (*pardashkha*), "officer, official," which may itself derive from Persian. This sense could convey the image of a nose supervising commandingly. See above, p. 681, n. 61.

On the nose of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:130a–b (*IR*). On the Concealed Brain, see above, notes 22–23. On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:103b; 3:130b. On the animating power of the divine breath, see Genesis 2:7: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being*.

47. **Whereas the nose of *Ze'eir Anpin*…** His nose sometimes flares with fiery judgment against sinful humanity, whereas the nose of the Holy Ancient One soothes the flaring nostrils of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) with the breath of life.

The verse in Isaiah reads in full: *For the sake of My name* אפי אאריך (*a'arikh appi*), *I delay My wrath* [or hyperliterally: *lengthen My nose*], *and for My praise* אחטם (*eḥetom*), *I refrain* [or: *restrain Myself*; *restrain it*], *for you, so as not to cut you off*. The verbal root חטם (*ḥtm*), "to restrain, bridle, muzzle," which occurs in the Bible only here, is a cognate of the Rabbinic Hebrew noun חוטם (*ḥotem*), Aramaic חוטמא (*ḥutma*), "nose."

See *Zohar* 3:130b (*IR*), 137b–138a (*IR*), 294a (*IZ*). The full verse in Samuel reads: *Smoke rose from His nostrils, consuming fire from His mouth, coals blazed from it* [or: *from Him*].

48. **In the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava...** In this venerable source, Rav Yeiva Sava determined that the letter ה (*he*) is suspended in the mouth of the Holy Ancient One, not in His nostril. (The verse in Samuel, quoted in the preceding note, mentions both *nostrils* and *mouth*.) Regarding the present context, Rabbi Shim'on disagrees, although he admits that both views are valid—"it amounts to one." Yet *Binah* (symbolized by the letter *he*) is the source of Judgment, whose wrathful aspect appears in the flaring nose.

The Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. On this library, see above, p. 165, n. 38. On this particular book, see below at note 200; cf. below at note 73.

49. **All the enhancements of the Ancient One...** The Holy Ancient One is arrayed in the Concealed Brain, while *Ze'eir Anpin* is arrayed in *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). From the *he* in *Ze'eir Anpin* (corresponding to *Binah*), Judgment issues; whereas the *he* in the Holy Ancient One represents pure Compassion.

On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, note 20. On the Concealed Brain, see above, notes 22–23.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom; the earth is filled with Your riches*.

50. **In the beard of the Holy Ancient One hangs all…** From this beard flows all; upon it depends all of existence.

The term מזלא (*mazzala*)—Hebrew מזל (*mazzal*)—has a wide range of meaning: "constellation, planet, planetary or astrological influence, zodiacal sign, guiding star, guardian angel, destiny, fortune." Here it refers to the long flowing body of the beard of the Holy Ancient One, based on the root נזל (*nzl*), "to flow."

On the universal influence of *mazzala*, see *Targum*, Ecclesiastes 9:2: "All depends upon *mazzala*, destiny [or: fortune; astrological influence]." Cf. BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a, in the name of Rava: "Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but on *mazzala*, destiny."

See Rashi on *Shabbat* 75a, s.v. *le-einei ha-ammim*; Ibn Ezra on Job 28:1; *Zohar* 1:43b (*Heikh*), 115a, 137a, 156b, 159b, 160b, 180b–181a, 198a, 207b; 2:6a, 177a (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*), 252b (*Heikh*), 274b (*Tosafot*); 3:25b–26a, 77b, 79b, 134a–b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*), 295b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 193–94 (and Wolfson's notes); intro, 51–53; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 65–66 (82); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 37a–b, 74a, 95a; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 128–31.

The beard of the Holy Ancient One is described in immense detail in *Idra Rabba*. There both the eighth and thirteen enhancements of this beard are described as *mazzala*. The eighth enhancement is the widening of the beard beneath the mouth and its extension all the way down to the navel; the thirteenth is the hair behind this visible hanging hair. Thus both of these enhancements together constitute the full flowing body of the beard. See *Zohar* 3:134a–b (*IR*).

On the significance of the beard, see Vol. 8, p. xii; pp. 346–47, n. 82; 349–50, n. 99. On the beard of the Holy

Ancient One, see *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdTs*); 3:130b–135a (*IR*); Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 118–24.

On the beard as glorious, see BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Korḥah: "The glory of a face is the beard." See Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 19:27; *Zohar* 2:122b, 176b–177b (*SdTs*), 186b; 3:130b–134b (*IR*), 139a–140b (*IR*), 289b (*IZ*), 295a–b (*IZ*). Cf. David Kimḥi on 2 Samuel 10:5. The word "watching" renders אשגחותא (*ashgaḥuta*), "watching, watchfulness, supervision, providence."

51. **Thirteen flows of fine anointing oil…** The flowing beard of the Holy Ancient One conveys thirteen streams of emanation to the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*. These correspond to the thirteen תקונין (*tiqqunin*), "enhancements" (or "locks, curls, curlicues, formations, arrangements, features, facets"), which are described in detail in *Idra Rabba*.

According to the account there, whereas the beard of the Holy Ancient One includes thirteen *tiqqunin*, "enhancements" (or "features"), the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* includes only nine. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that nine of the Holy Ancient One's *tiqqunin* flow into the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One), assuaging His harsh Judgment.

According to rabbinic sources, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See above, p. 201, n. 44. On the thirteen springs associated with the beard of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdTs*); 3:131a–b (*IR*), 134b (*IR*), 139a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*), 295a (*IZ*). See also Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 219–25; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 99–103.

On the thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 2:176b–177a (*SdTs*); 3:130b–134a (*IR*). On the nine enhancements of *Ze'eir Anpin*, see *Zohar* 2:122b, 177a–b (*SdTs*); 3:139a–141a (*IR*), 295a–b (*IZ*). See below, note 194. On the connection between the thirteen

enhancements and the thirteen attributes of Compassion, see above, note 26.

On the semantic range of the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), see above, note 20. On the association of the root תקן (*tqn*) with hair, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:6: "...מתקן (*metaqqen*), arranging [or: smoothing], his hair."

52. **When this *mazzala* hangs evenly to the navel...** When the flowing beard hangs symmetrically to the belly, all the lower *sefirot* depend upon it. Within it spreads an emanation from the highest of the three heads of the Holy Ancient One, corresponding to *Ein Sof*.

On the motif of the beard extending to the navel, see *Zohar* 3:130b–131a (*IR*), 134a–b (*IR*); Horowitz, "Al Mashma'uyyot ha-Zaqan bi-Qhillot Yisra'el," 136–37. On the three heads, see above, notes 23–24.

"Vaporous cluster" renders קוטרא (*qutra*), which can mean either "smoke" or "knot." See *Zohar* 1:15a, 30a, 33b, 94b, 106a, 161b, 172a; 2:80a, 124a, 177a (*SdTs*); 3:45b, 51a–b, 107a, 295b (*IZ*).

53. **In this beard...** The three heads of the Holy Ancient One emanate to His beard. The holy letters י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*)—which are the three consonants of the name יהוה (*YHVH*)—are "suspended in this beard," sustaining the lower forms of these letters in *Ze'eir Anpin*.

When Israel sinned by worshiping the Golden Calf, Judgment loomed, threatening to destroy them. Moses saved his people by uttering the thirteen attributes of Compassion, thereby drawing these down from the Holy Ancient One to *Ze'eir Anpin*, who at that time was dominated by Judgment. The list of thirteen attributes begins: *YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God*, and in the Masoretic text, these two names are separated by a pausal sign: *YHVH* | *YHVH*. According to Rabbi Shim'on, this pausal sign implies that the first *YHVH* refers to *Ze'eir Anpin*, whereas the second refers to the Holy Ancient One. (Or vice versa. Alternatively, the first *YHVH* refers to *Ze'eir Anpin* when He is

characterized by Judgment, whereas the second refers to when the influx of Compassion from the Holy Ancient One assuages Him.)

On the concluding sentence, see *Zohar* 3:132b (*IR*): "Rabbi Shim'on said to him, 'You are worthy, Rabbi Yitsḥak, of beholding the glory of the enhancements of the beard and the Countenance of Days of the Ancient of Ancients. Happy is your share, and happy is my share along with you in the world that is coming!'"

On the letters (and the name) י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*), see above, note 43. On the thirteen attributes, see above, note 26; below, note 203.

On the pausal sign פסק (*paseq*), literally "cutting off; interposition," see above, pp. 257–58, n. 35. One of the functions of the *paseq* is to ensure that the reader pronounces distinctly each one of a pair of identical words or names in the biblical text. On the significance of this pausal sign between *YHVH! YHVH!* see *Zohar* 1:158b; 3:138a (*IR*). On the significance of this repetition of the name *YHVH*, see also BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17b; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 22a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:1.

54. **This Holy Ancient One…** It is so concealed that only its head is mentioned, without a complete body.

On the Holy Ancient One's not being "mentioned," cf. the remark by the anonymous author of *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut* (82b): "Know that *Ein Sof*… is not alluded to in the Torah or in the Prophets or in the Writings [i.e., in the whole Bible], but the Masters of Service [i.e., the kabbalists] have received a slight hint of It." Cf. *Zohar* 3:130a (*IR*); Vol. 8, pp. 341–42, n. 66.

On the Holy Ancient One's head being mentioned without a body, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 186. Cf. the divine vision in Daniel 7:9, which limits its description of God to His head of hair: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the*

hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire.

On the head(s) of the Holy Ancient One, see above, notes 23–24. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:334; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

55. **Its enhancements are arrayed…** In the Concealed Brain, the last of the three heads of the Holy Ancient One. Supernal *Ḥesed* represents the root of the *sefirah Ḥesed*.

On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, note 20. On the Concealed Brain, see above, notes 22–23. On Supernal *Ḥesed*, see above, note 38.

56. **the one that strikes, strikes this brain…** *Ein Sof* stimulates the Concealed Brain. From the flowing beard derives the lower brain of *Ze'eir Anpin*, namely *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom).

On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50. On the thirty-two paths of *Ḥokhmah*, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2.

57. **three supernal heads are illumined…** Namely, *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*, which are pictured as the three heads of *Ze'eir Anpin*, modeled on the three heads within the Holy Ancient One. This triadic structure characterizes the entire sefirotic realm: right, left, and center. See above, note 29; below, note 62.

58. **Who is the Holy Ancient One?…** This term includes both *Ein Sof* and *Keter*. *Ein Sof* itself cannot be known, designated, or calculated at all. The "two heads" included in It are *Keter* and the Concealed Brain.

On the term "Holy Ancient One," see above, note 18. On the Holy Ancient One's not being "designated," cf. above, note 54. Similar language is applied to *Ein Sof* in *Zohar* 1:21a.

On the three heads of the Holy Ancient One, see above, notes 23–24. The full verse in Psalms reads: *I said, "I will*

guard my ways from sinning with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked is before me.” Here *sinning with my tongue* refers to attempting to describe the indescribable nature of *Ein Sof*.

59. **The place where beginning derives…** *Ḥokhmah* represents the first ascertainable beginning of emanation, which “becomes three heads,” namely *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da’at*.

On *Ḥokhmah* as “beginning,” see *Zohar* 1:15a. On its thirty-two paths, see above, note 56. On the triad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da’at*, see below, note 62.

60. **generates one river…** Namely, *Binah*, who waters the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, which are pictured as plants in the Garden of *Shekhinah*. These *sefirot* also represent the body of *Ze’eir Anpin*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. In the *Zohar, Eden* alludes to *Ḥokhmah*. See above, note 37. On the significance of this verse, see above, p. 201, n. 45; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 229–51.

61. **another brain** Namely, *Binah*.

62. **That other one…** *Binah* represents “the radiance emanating from” *Ḥokhmah*. *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* join into the third head of *Ze’eir Anpin*: *Da’at*, which emerges from “the depth of the well” of *Keter*. *Da’at* is formed into a brain and pervades all the chambers of the body of *Ze’eir Anpin*.

Da’at is presented in the *Zohar* in various ways: as an extension of *Keter*, as mediating between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, and as the inner core of *Ze’eir Anpin* (or *Tif’eret*). On *Da’at*—Aramaic דעתא (*Da’ta*)—see *Zohar* 2:123a; 3:136a (*IR*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:278–79, 335, 341. On the triad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah* (or *Tevunah*), and *Da’at*, see Exodus 31:3; and *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3: “By ten utterances was the world created … and by three are they comprised, namely,

Ḥokhmah, Tevunah, and *Da'at*." See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 170–71, n. 65.

The context in Proverbs 3 (verses 19–20) reads: *YHVH by wisdom founded the earth, set the heavens firm by understanding. By His knowledge the depths burst open, and the skies dripped dew*.

The context in Proverbs 24 (verses 3–4) reads: *By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge rooms are filled with all precious and lovely wealth*. On the second verse, see *Zohar* 2:14b (*MhN*), 123a; 3:136a (*IR*), 291a (*IZ*), 296a (*IZ*).

63. **These shine from the radiance…** The subject is *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*.

64. **three others, called Fathers…** *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This sefirotic triad, in turn, illuminates the last one: *Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod* (pictured as Sons). The streaming light from the Holy Ancient One assuages the harshness of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One), bringing joy to all.

65. **This Eden is drawn from supernal Eden…** *Ḥokhmah* is drawn from the Concealed Brain of the Holy Ancient One, and from it the flow of emanation (and of all existence) begins. In the boundless realm of the Holy Ancient One itself, the terms "beginning" and "end" do not pertain. This realm cannot be addressed directly in the second person (as You), but only indirectly in the third person (as He). The more personal pronoun You pertains to *Ḥokhmah*, who is also pictured as Father. The verse in Isaiah identifies *You* as *father*.

On *Ḥokhmah* as Eden, see above, note 60. On the Concealed Brain as supernal Eden, see above, note 37. On *Ḥokhmah* as You and Father, see *Zohar* 2:90a (quoting the verse from Isaiah). On He as alluding to the Holy Ancient One (or *Keter*), see *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:79b, 129b–130a (*IR*), 134b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*). Cf. above, note 44.

66. **In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Sava…** This venerable source applied the second-person pronoun (You) to the entirety of *Ze'eir Anpin* and the third-person pronoun (He) to the Holy Ancient One. But Rabbi Shim'on is applying You to *Ḥokhmah*. Although this *sefirah* is concealed, it can still be addressed directly as You.

Father *Ḥokhmah* engenders the patriarchal triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (who are themselves called Fathers), so He is Father of Fathers. See above, note 64.

Ḥokhmah Himself issues from the Holy Ancient One, who is called *Ayin* (Nothingness). This paradoxical name alludes to the Holy Ancient One's undifferentiated and incomprehensible nature: no-thingness. See above, note 24.

The full verse in Job reads: והחכמה מאין תמצא (*Ve-ha-ḥokhkmah me-ayin timmatse*), *But wisdom, where is it found, and where is the place of understanding*? Here, Rabbi Shim'on transforms the first rhetorical question into a spiritual formula: *Wisdom comes into being me-ayin, out of nothingness*.

On the creative reading of the verse in Job, see Asher ben David, *Sefer ha-Yiḥud*, 105, 107; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 483; idem, cited in Scholem, "Te'udah Ḥadashah le-Toledot Reshit ha-Qabbalah," 156 (where Ezra cites the authority of Isaac the Blind); Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 153; Naḥmanides, toward the end of his commentary on Job 28; *Zohar* 2:121a; Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 1:2; Exodus 6:3; 16:25; 17:7; Matt, *"Ayin,"* p. 75; p. 96, n. 36. Cf. *Zohar* 2:83a (Vol. 4, pp. 457–58, n. 328).

The *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Sava (the Elder) is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. On this library, see above, 165, n. 38. On this particular book, see above, p. 763 at n. 21; cf. above at note 48.

67. ***Elohim understands its way…*** This verse describes how God alone knows *ḥokhmah* (wisdom). For Rabbi Shim'on,

it implies that *Elohim* (referring here to *Ze'eir Anpin*) *understands its way*—that is, the pathways into which *Ḥokhmah* branches. However, only *He* (namely the Holy Ancient One) *knows* the essential *place* (and nature) of *Ḥokhmah*. And of course, the Holy Ancient One alone knows his own Concealed Brain (or supernal Wisdom).

Cf. *Zohar* 3:129b (*IR*), 140b (*IR*). On the Holy Ancient One as *He*, see above, note 65. On the verse in Job, see also *Zohar* 1:48b–49a.

68. **From it expand thirty-two paths...** Subtle paths, not broad and open ways. The total of thirty-two embraces the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten utterances by which the world was created (which correspond to the ten *sefirot*).

Ḥokhmah (Wisdom) represents the beginning of the flow of emanation; and He includes within itself the root of *Shekhinah*, who is the culmination of that flow. She is pictured as the daughter of Father Wisdom and is called Lower Wisdom.

On the thirty-two paths of *Ḥokhmah*, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2; above at note 56. On the ten utterances by which the world was created, see M *Avot* 5:1; Vol. 7, p. 65, n. 200. On the title Father of Fathers, see above, note 66. For the full verse in Psalms, see above, note 49.

69. **Surely it is time...** To reveal the secrets of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, Father and Mother, before Rabbi Shim'on passes away.

70. **to array all as male and female...** Within the Holy Ancient One appeared the androgynous archetype, composed of male and female, but these could not endure (or be expressed distinctly) until they emerged as *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

On the significance of the union of male and female, see above, p. 736, n. 9; Vol. 5, pp. 545–46, n. 3; Vol. 7, p. 525, n. 534; Vol. 8, pp. 12–13, n. 36; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 329–30; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 155–56.

71. **This Wisdom, principle of all…** The primordial realm of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) generates all. When Father *Ḥokhmah* issued from the Holy Ancient One, He included *Binah* within Himself. She then emerged as a separate *sefirah*. Together, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* sustain all gendered existence.

72. **Father of all fathers…** Initially, of the patriarchal triad *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are described as Fathers. See above, notes 64, 66.

When *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* united, they generated the lower *sefirot*, and the flow of emanation (described as "faith") spread.

The verse in Proverbs reads: כי אִם לבינה תקרא (*ki im la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, if you call* [or: *call out*] *to understanding, and raise your voice to discernment*. A midrashic interpretation playfully changes the vowel beneath the א (*alef*) of אִם (*im*), *if*, thereby turning the word into אֵם (*em*), *mother*, and transforming the sense of the first half of the verse: תקרא כי אֵם לבינה (*ki em la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, you will call binah, understanding, "Mother."* Here Rabbi Shim'on adopts this midrashic reading to demonstrate that *Binah* is the Divine Mother.

On the midrashic reading of the verse in Proverbs, see *Targum Yonatan*, ad loc.; BT *Berakhot* 57a; *Midrash Mishlei* 23:25; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:4; *Bahir* 74 (104); *Zohar* 2:101a, 177b (*SdTs*); 3:291a (*IZ*); *TZ*, intro, 2a, 12a; 20–21, 56a; 65, 96a–b; 69, 106b, 115b; *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. Cf. Proverbs 7:4.

73. **In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Yeiva Sava…** This venerable source contains a mystical interpretation of the name בינה (*Binah*), reading it as בן י ה (*Ben yod he*), Son of *Yod He* (or Son of *Yah*). The point-like letter י (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*; the feminine marker ה (*he*) symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother. Together they engender *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Son) and *Shekhinah* (the Daughter).

The *Aggadta* of the House of Rav Yeiva Sava (the Elder) is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary

library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, notes 48, 66.

74. **the holy ones of the Most High…** The proven spiritual seekers who have entered the orchard of wisdom and emerged in peace.

Rabbi Shim'on refers to his Companions as "these sons of mine here." The phrase "though not all of them" qualifies "these matters" (not "these sons of mine"). The Companions had not fully explored or understood the secrets—in particular, those relating to Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah*, which Rabbi Shim'on had not revealed in the earlier gathering, *Idra Rabba*. Now the Companions "have been illumined completely," and Rabbi Shim'on looks forward to sharing with them the bliss of the world that is coming.

The phrase "entered and emerged" derives from the famous story of four rabbis who "entered the orchard," that is, who engaged in mystical contemplation. Only Rabbi Akiva "entered in peace and emerged in peace." In the *Zohar*, "entering and emerging" refers to the seeker who has entered the realm of mystery and emerged unscathed, one who has plumbed the secrets and discovered how to apply them in his life. Normally "entering and emerging" is a highly advanced stage, but here Rabbi Shim'on insists that without this, life is pointless: "better for him if he had never been created!" See below at note 117. Cf. *Zohar* 3:141a (*IR*): "For whoever has entered and not emerged—better for him if he had never been created!"

The Companions participating in Rabbi Shim'on's final gathering had already proven themselves in the earlier gathering (*Idra Rabba*). See above, notes 7–8.

On "entering and emerging" see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4 (and cf. *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:4; BT *Ḥagigah* 14b); *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 33:21; *Zohar* 1:44a (*Heikh*), 112a (*MhN*), 147b (referring to venturing into the demonic realm); 2:176a, 179a (*SdTs*), 213b; 3:127b (*IR*), 141a (*IR*), 144a–b (*IR*), 287a, 292a (*IZ*), 297a; *ZḤ* 2c (*SO*), 6c (*SO*), 19a (*MhN*), 105a; Moses de

León, *Shushan Edut*, 345; Liebes, "Ha-Mashiaḥ shel ha-Zohar," 153–56, and nn. 240–41; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 35, 97, 130–31; 178, nn. 110–11; Wolfson, "Forms of Visionary Ascent," 211–14; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 63–67.

On the expression "better for him if he had never been created!" see above, pp. 503–4, n. 9. Cf. M *Ḥagigah* 2:1: "Whoever contemplates four things, better for him if he had never come into the world: what is above? what is below? what was before? and what will be after? Whoever shows no concern for the honor of his Maker, better for him if had never come into the world!"

The expression "the holy ones of the Most High" appears in Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27, where it refers to the people of Israel.

On the concluding sentence, see Rabbi Shim'on's similar remark to Rabbi Yitsḥak (*Zohar* 3:132b [*IR*], quoted above, note 53): "Happy is your share, and happy is my share along with you in the world that is coming!"

75. **All that I have said...** The Holy Ancient One and *Ze'eir Anpin* are essentially one, since the former includes and is manifested in the latter. See *Zohar* 3:141a (*IR*), 143a (*IR*); cf. 2:178b (*SdTs*).

In the concluding sentence, "He" refers to the Holy Ancient One; "His Name" refers to the *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*, which are symbolized by the letters of the name *YHVH*. See above, note 65; p. 74, n. 60.

76. **This beginning, called Father...** The primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* is symbolized by the point-like letter י (*yod*). The full spelling of this letter's name—יוד (*yod*)—includes the letters ו (*vav*) and ד (*dalet*). The letter *vav*, whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). The letter *dalet* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is sometimes described as דלה (*dallah*), "poor," until She is filled with the riches of emanation from above.

Thus, *yod* includes the "beginning and end" of the sefirotic spectrum.

On the significance of the full spelling of the letter *yod*, see *Zohar* 3:10b, 65b, 92a. On *yod* as "beginning and end of all," cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 363, and Wolfson's note 9. On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50.

77. **that river flowing forth is called the World that is Coming...** *Binah* is pictured as a constantly flowing river.

עלמא דאתי (*Alma de-atei*) is the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*), "the world that is coming." This term has often been understood as referring to the hereafter and often been translated as "the world to come." From a mystical perspective, however, "the world that is coming" already exists, occupying another dimension. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, "the world that is coming" refers to *Binah*, the continuous source of emanation, watering *the garden* (as explained below). See above, p. 144, n. 279.

On the notion that "the World that is Coming is created by י (*yod*)," see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10: "כי ביה יהוה צור עולמים (*Ki be-Yah YHVH tsur olamim*), *For by Yah YHVH, an eternal rock* (Isaiah 26:4)—with these two letters the blessed Holy One created His world [interpreting the verse as: *For* ביה (*be-Yah*), *by* (the letters) י ה (*yod, he*), *YHVH* צר עולמים (*tsar olamim*), *formed worlds*].... This world was created by ה (*he*)... and the world that is coming was created by י (*yod*)." See below, pp. 861–62, n. 38.

On the concluding sentence, see the preceding note. The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. This *river* symbolizes *Binah*, issuing from *Ḥokhmah* (described as *Eden*) and watering the sefirotic *garden*. See above, p. 710, n. 165; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 229–51.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*],

בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail*. See above, p. 121, n. 206.

78. **In the *Aggadta* of the House of Rav…** This venerable source expounds the significance of the full spelling of name of the letter יוד (*yod*), which includes the letters ו (*vav*) and ד (*dalet*). The letter *vav*, whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*). The letter *dalet* symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Together, *vav* and *dalet* constitute "the planting in the (sefirotic) Garden." From another perspective, each of these two letters represents one Garden.

Furthermore, the numerical value of *dalet* (four) alludes to the *four riverheads* mentioned in the verse from Genesis, which may symbolize the four archangels accompanying *Shekhinah*. In this verse, *Eden* symbolizes *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). See the two preceding notes.

The *Aggadta* of the House of Rav is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, notes 48, 66, 73.

79. **Therefore it is called Father of all…** *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) engenders all the lower *sefirot*, including the patriarchal triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (who are themselves called Fathers), so He is Father of Fathers. See above, notes 66, 68. For the full verse in Psalms, see above, note 49.

80. **In its place it is not revealed…** Father *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) remains unknown until He unites with Mother *Binah*.

The phrase "totality of the Holy Name" alludes to the sefirotic significance of the letters of the name *YHVH*, which Rabbi Shim'on proceeds to explain.

81. **But now, aspects are carved…** The deep significance of the letters of יהוה (*YHVH*) is now revealed. The first, point-like letter of this name—י (*yod*)—symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). The second letter—ה

(*he*), which is a feminine marker—symbolizes Mother *Binah*. The remaining two letters—ה ו (*vav, he*)—represent *Tif'eret* (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him [*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*]) and *Shekhinah*, who are pictured as "two children" of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

The name בינה (*Binah*) includes the letters י (*yod*) and ה (*he*)—symbolizing *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*—and also the letters ב (*bet*) and נ (*nun*), which spell בן (*ben*), "son," signifying *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*), the Divine Son.

On *vav* as symbolizing *Tif'eret*, see above, note 76. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60.

82. **Now She is called תבונה (*Tevunah*)...** *Binah* is also called by this cognate term, which similarly means "Understanding" (or "Discernment"). Three of the letters of תבונה (*Tevunah*) spell out בן בת (*ben, bat*), "Son, Daughter"—employing the ב (*bet*) twice—referring respectively to *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized by the remaining two letters: ה ו (*vav, he*).

83. **In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** This source interprets two depictions of a female figure in Song of Songs (ascribed to King Solomon). In the opening verse of chapter 4, Solomon alludes to *Binah*, who is addressed as רעיתי (*ra'yati*), *my beloved*. Later in the same chapter, he employs the term *bride*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, the "Female below."

On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On the two enhancements in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 1:240b; cf. 3:77b–78a. Song of Songs 4:8 reads: *With me from Lebanon, bride; with me from Lebanon come!* The term *bride* then reappears in verses 9–12. On Song of Songs 4:1, cf. Song of Songs 1:15.

84. **Both of them refer to this Female below...** Some claim that both *my beloved* and *bride* can be interpreted as referring to *Shekhinah*. However, this is incorrect. *Binah*—symbolized by the first ה (*he*) in יהוה (*YHVH*)—

is called *my beloved*, whereas *Shekhinah* is often (though not always) called *bride*.

Human wickedness taints *Shekhinah*, making Her vulnerable to demonic forces and causing the Divine Male to distance Himself from Her, as if She were in a state of menstrual impurity. Once She is purified, the divine couple reunites and *Shekhinah* is renewed as a *bride*.

On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see above, p. 389, n. 307. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity to expose her nakedness*. On the polemical tone of the opening sentence here, see Asulin, "Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah," 158–60.

85. **But as for this Mother...** Mother *Binah* and Father *Ḥokhmah* are constantly united. In the verse from Genesis, the present tense of the verb *issues* implies this continual bond between *Binah* (the *river*) and *Ḥokhmah* (*Eden*). The term רעיתי (*ra'yati*), *my beloved*—addressed by *Ḥokhmah* to *Binah*—suggests their mutual רעותא (*re'uta*), "desire." Furthermore, both of them are known as רעים (*re'im*), constant "companions."

On the perpetual union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, pp. 709–10, n. 165. On their being called *re'im*, "companions" (and on the contrast between the two sefirotic couples), see *Zohar* 3:4a.

On the significance of the present tense of the verb *issues* (technically, the participle, rendered here in the present tense), see above, p. 710, n. 165. For the full verses in Genesis and Isaiah, see above, note 77.

86. **Solomon described two enhancements...** The enhancement pertaining to *Binah* is more concealed, since She is more concealed; whereas the enhancement pertaining to *Shekhinah* is fittingly more revealed. The "concealed" nature of the first enhancement may be reflected in the repeated reference to *your veil* in Song of Songs 4:1, 3.

Later in Song of Songs, Solomon links all the praise of *Shekhinah* to *her mother, Binah*. Because *Binah* is constantly united with *Ḥokhmah* (symbolized by י [*yod*]), She conveys the liberating stream of emanation to all. She is symbolized by the purifying power of Yom Kippur and by the *release* proclaimed in the Jubilee. Rabbi Shim'on plays on the words יובל (*yovel*), *Jubilee*, and יובל (*yuval*), *a stream*.

For various interpretations of the second sentence, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, pp. 681–82, n. 62. On יובל (*yuval*), *stream*, as the name of the primordial river (often in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10; BT *Bekhorot* 55b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 6:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16, 81a; *Tanḥuma, Pineḥas* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:18; *Zohar* 2:83a, 98b; 3:58a, 97a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 106; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69).

The verse in Song of Songs reads: *One alone is she—my dove, my perfect one. One alone is she to her mother, pure to her who bore her*. The full verse in Leviticus 16 reads: *For on this day He will effect purgation* [or: *atonement*] *for you* [or: *purgation* (or: *atonement*) *will be effected for you*], *to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure*.

The context in Leviticus 25 (verses 10–12) reads: *You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim* דרור (*deror*), *release* [or: *freedom*], *in the land for all of its inhabitants. A jubilee it shall be for you, and you shall go back each man to his holding, and each man to his clan you shall go back. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you. You shall not sow and you shall not reap its aftergrowth and you shall not pick its untrimmed vines. For it* [or: *she*] *is a jubilee; it* [or: *she*] *shall be holiness* [or: *holy*] *for you. From the field you may eat its yield*.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *He will be like a tree planted by water, spreading its roots by* יובל (*yuval*), *a stream; it does not fear when heat comes and its leaves are fresh; in a year of drought it is not anxious and does not cease yielding fruit*.

87. **כי אֵם לבינה תקרא (*Ki em la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, you will call Binah 'Mother'…*** The verse in Proverbs reads: כי אִם לבינה תקרא (*ki im la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, if you call* [or: *call out*] *to understanding, and raise your voice to discernment*. A midrashic interpretation playfully changes the vowel beneath the א (*alef*) of אִם (*im*), *if*, thereby turning the word into אֵם (*em*), *mother*, and transforming the sense of the first half of the verse: כי אֵם לבינה תקרא (*ki em la-binah tiqra*), *Indeed, you will call binah, understanding, "Mother*." Here Rabbi Shim'on adopts this midrashic reading to indicate that *Binah* is the Divine Mother. See above, note 72.

He then asks why the verse employs a synonym (and cognate) of *Binah*, namely תבונה (*tevunah*), *discernment* [or: *understanding*]. As he already explained (above at note 82), three of the letters of תבונה (*Tevunah*) spell out בן בת (*ben, bat*), "Son, Daughter," referring respectively to *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized by the remaining two letters: ו ה (*vav, he*). However, the name בינה (*Binah*) is superior because its letters allude to the divine parents as well as to the Son. The letters י (*yod*) and ה (*he*) symbolize *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, while the letters ב (*bet*) and נ (*nun*) spell בן (*ben*), "son." (See above at note 81.)

88. **Because this Son obtains…** Because *Tif'eret* (or *Ze'eir Anpin*) receives the qualities of His parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, He is called דעת (*Da'at*), which Rabbi Shim'on associates with עדות (*edut*), "testimony." *Tif'eret*'s full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), and the verse in Exodus is here applied to Him. The third share is (or derives from) the hidden source of *Da'at*, situated above between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

On the triad of *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*, see above, note 62. On *Da'at* and *edut*, see below at note 96. On the double

share of the firstborn, see Deuteronomy 21:17.

89. **Crowns that were treasured away…** The hidden sources of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*. See *Zohar* 3:61b.

90. **When this Father and Mother shine upon them…** Namely, upon the qualities of *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Ḥesed*, and *Gevurah*, all of which are included within the Son. These four qualities correspond to the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head. The Son provides for *Shekhinah*, the Daughter.

On the daughter's being nourished by the son, cf. M *Ketubbot* 13:3. The context in Daniel (4:8–9) describes the cosmic Tree seen by King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream: *The tree grew and became mighty, and its top reached the heavens and its branches to the ends of all the earth. Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant; there was food for all in it* [or: *in him*]. *Beneath it the beasts of the field found shade, and in its branches dwelled the birds of heaven, and all flesh was nourished from it*. Cf. Daniel 4:18. Here, the tree symbolizes the Divine Son.

On the four compartments of the *tefillah* of the head, see above, p. 586, n. 256; pp. 677–78, n. 52.

91. **All this and that…** The Divine Son and Daughter are linked as one, the former sustaining the latter. *Yesod* (considered as an extension of *Tif'eret*) is known as Righteous One, while *Shekhinah* is called Righteousness. See above, pp. 85–86, n. 93.

92. **This Father and Mother are enfolded…** *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* are united, both deriving from the Holy Ancient One. On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50.

93. **This Father and Mother prepare the house…** The sefirotic structure beneath them. The flow of emanation from *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at* (*wisdom, understanding*, and *knowledge*) builds, establishes, and fills this structure. The *belly* mentioned in Proverbs 22 refers here to *Tif'eret*, the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

See above, note 62. The context in Proverbs 24 (verses 3–4) reads: *By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge rooms are filled with all precious and lovely* [or: *pleasant*] *wealth*. The full verse in Proverbs 22 (referring to words of the wise) reads: *For it is pleasant if you keep them in your belly, that together they may be ready on your lips*.

94. **In the *Idra*...** That is, in the earlier gathering (known as *Idra Rabba*). See above, note 1. There, Rabbi Shim'on did not reveal, for example, how *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* emerge from the Holy Ancient One.

In rabbinic literature, the verse in Isaiah is interpreted as referring to various questions that will be posed to a person's soul in the afterlife, including: "Did you fix times for [studying] Torah? Did you engage in the dialectics of wisdom? Did you understand one thing from another?" Here, Rabbi Shim'on says that he was saving certain secrets for that occasion; but since God wants him to reveal these matters now while he is still alive, he is doing so. Thereby, having revealed as much wisdom on earth as he could, he will enter the divine realm without shame. See above, note 9.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *He* [or: *It*] *will be the faithfulness of your times, stronghold of salvation—wisdom and knowledge—the awe of YHVH is his treasure*. On this verse as alluding to study, see BT *Shabbat* 31a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13, pp. 255–56; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 15, p. 70; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:14; *Zohar* 1:127b (*MhN*); 2:223a.

95. ***For* אל דעות (*el de'ot*), *a God of knowledges*...** The plural *de'ot* (*knowledges*) refers to two aspects of *Da'at*: the hidden source of *Da'at* (situated between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*) and the manifestation of *Da'at* in *Tif'eret* (who is the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*). Thus, "He (i.e., *Tif'eret*) is *Da'at*; (the hidden) *Da'at* He inherits."

See *Zohar* 2:123a. On the verse in Proverbs, see above, note 93. The full verse in Samuel reads: *Do not go on*

talking high and mighty—arrogance slips from your mouth —for אל דעות (*El de'ot*), *a God all-knowing* [literally: *a God of knowledges*], *is YHVH, and by Him actions are weighed* [or: *determined*].

96. **In the Book of *Aggadta*...** According to this legendary source, the word דעות (*de'ot*), *knowledges*, implies its anagram: עדות (*edut*), *testimony*. By His very nature, *Tif'eret* (who is symbolized by Jacob) testifies to the qualities that He has inherited from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. See above, note 88.

The reference to *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment) does not correspond to any passage in the extant version of this composition. Similarly, in *Idra Rabba* there are various references to *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* that do not appear in its current version. On the relation between the *Idrot* and *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*, see above, note 43. For attempts to identify a parallel in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* to the passage here, see *Or Yaqar*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The concluding sentence implies that the concealed nature of this matter allows for various interpretations; thus "it is all."

The Book of *Aggadta* is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, p. 165, n. 38. The full verse in Psalms reads: *He established a testimony in Jacob, and ordained a teaching in Israel, which He commanded to our fathers to make them known to their children*.

97. **This Father and Mother encompass all...** *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* include the entire flow of emanation, while they themselves derive from the *mazzala* of the Holy Ancient One (or Ancient of all Ancients).

In the concluding sentences, "Him" and "He" refer to the Holy Ancient One; "His Name" refers to the *sefirot* from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*, which are symbolized by the letters of the name *YHVH*. See above, note 75. On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50.

98. **All the words of the *Idra*...** That is, the secrets revealed during the *Idra Rabba*.

On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1. On "entering and emerging," see above, note 74. For the expression "I have not acted for my own glory..." in the context of revealing secrets, see BT *Megillah* 3a; *Zohar* 2:102a; 3:144a (*IR*). Cf. *Ta'anit* 20a, *Bava Metsi'a* 59b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 6. On the theme of shame, see above, notes 9, 94.

99. **I see that the blessed Holy One...** God Himself has arrived along with souls of the righteous. See above, note 14.

The death of Rabbi Shim'on is described as a הלולא (*hillula*), "festivity," especially "wedding feast, wedding celebration," because he is about to unite with *Shekhinah*. See below at note 237; *Zohar* 1:218a (quoting Song of Songs 3:11, which mentions *the day of his wedding*). Cf. 3:144b (*IR*). On Rabbi Shim'on's earthly *hillula*, see BT *Ketubbot* 62b.

See also the account in BT *Ḥagigah* 14b, where Rabbi Yehoshu'a expounds on the mysteries of the Divine Chariot, "and the ministering angels came and gathered to listen, like people coming and gathering to watch the entertainments for a bridegroom and bride." Cf. JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77a.

100. **Rabbi Abba said...** Here Rabbi Abba, who serves as the scribe in this dramatic session, relates how Rabbi Shim'on (known as "the Holy Lamp") proceeds.

The "permission" referred to means "permission to reveal" one particular matter. On Rabbi Shim'on's title בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68.

On the expression "wept—and laughed," see above, p. 586, n. 257. On the wording "Summoning his strength...," cf. Genesis 48:2: *Someone told Jacob, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you." Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed*.

101. ***A river issues from Eden…*** For the full verses in Genesis and Isaiah, see above, note 77. Cf. above at note 85.

102. **all the days I have existed…** Rabbi Shim'on has yearned all his life to convey the secrets that he now fully understands. The final day of his life is adorned with the "crown" of revelation. This ultimate day will not end soon, nor will the sun set, until he completes his teaching.

On yearning for the final day of life, cf. *Zohar* 1:98a (*MhN*). On the wording "will not hasten to enter its place…," cf. the conclusion of Joshua 10:13, and *Targum Yonatan*, ad loc. On the theme of not entering shamefully into the world that is coming, see above, note 9.

103. ***Righteousness and justice…*** Rabbi Shim'on begins to expound this verse. All of the sefirotic lamps shine from the Holy Ancient One ("the Supernal Lamp"). See above at notes 18–19. Above (at note 100), Rabbi Shim'on himself is called "the Supernal Lamp."

104. **Crowns of the King…** That is, of the Holy Ancient One, whose "light within, within" illumines all the sefirotic crowns. These *sefirot* (from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*) constitute the "name" of the Holy Ancient One, revealing Its qualities and nature. On the concluding sentence, see *Zohar* 2:86a; 3:11b, 70a, 93b; above, notes 19, 75, 97.

105. **Garment of the King…** Beneath these sefirotic garments is the inner light of the Holy Ancient One. Although the other lights appear to be distinct rays, ultimately they have no existence independent of their source—"there is nothing but the Supernal Lamp."

See above, note 19. On the wording "Upon contemplating…," cf. p. 51 at n. 142 and the conclusion of that note.

106. **two lamps, perfection of the King's throne…** Two *sefirot*, *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. These are called respectively צדק (*Tsedeq*), "Righteousness," and משפט (*Mishpat*), "Justice" (mentioned in the verse in Psalms quoted by Rabbi Shim'on,

above at note 103). This sefirotic couple "perfect" the throne of the Holy Ancient One. *Shekhinah* is nourished by *Tif'eret*. On Righteousness and Justice, see, e.g., *Zohar* 3:85b, 91a, 293b (*IZ*), 296b (*IZ*).

107. **Sometimes She is called מלכי־צדק (*Malki-tsedeq*)...** *Shekhinah* is sometimes identified with this king, based on Her names מלכות (*Malkhut*), "Kingdom," and צדק (*Tsedeq*), "Righteousness." The place-name שלם (*shalem*), *Salem*, is associated here with שלימו (*shelimu*), "perfection, completion."

Tif'eret (known as Justice, and characterized by Compassion) assuages the harsh quality of *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness).

Melchizedek (whose name means "righteous king") was the king-priest of Salem (Jerusalem), who participated in Abraham's victory over an alliance of eastern kings. The full verse in Genesis reads: *Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine, for he was priest to El Elyon*. On *Shekhinah* as Melchizedek, see *Zohar* 1:87a–b; 3:53b, 90b, 193b.

108. **But when sins of the world proliferate...** Human wickedness taints *Shekhinah* (symbolized by "the sanctuary"), causing *Tif'eret* (Justice) to distance Himself from Her and empowering the demonic Serpent. Then the harsh quality of *Shekhinah* (Righteousness) harms the world, and maleficent forces attack.

In BT *Ḥagigah* 4b–5a, the verse from Proverbs is interpreted as referring to someone who dies before his time. In the *Zohar*, it implies that when *Tif'eret* (*justice*) removes Himself from *Shekhinah*, His quality of compassionate *justice* is lacking, and consequently the innocent may be *swept away*. See above, p. 735, n. 8.

The concluding phrase—"from another place"—implies "from the demonic Serpent." See Scholem. On *Shekhinah*'s being tainted, cf. above, note 84.

109. ***Everything have I seen in the days of my breath…*** The full verse reads: *Everything have I seen* הבלי בימי (*bi-ymei hevli*), *in my days of mere breath* [literally: *in the days of my breath*]: *a righteous one perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked one living a long life in his evil*.

The term הבל (*hevel*) is the key word of the book of Ecclesiastes, whose author is traditionally identified as King Solomon. Its basic meaning is "breath, vapor," and in this biblical book it connotes "futility, vanity, absurdity, ephemerality, that which is empty and fleeting." In the *Zohar*, however, *hevel* can refer to a divine "breath," symbolizing one of the *sefirot*, which animates existence. These "breaths above" represent "faces (or aspects) of the King."

According to Rabbi Shim'on, the phrase *my breath* refers specifically to *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—known as Righteousness. When Her harshness is aroused, even a righteous person may perish *in his righteousness*—that is, on account of *Shekhinah*—because *Tif'eret* (known as Justice) has distanced Himself from Her.

See the preceding note. On the divine breaths, see *Zohar* 1:146b (*ST*); 2:10b, 38b–39a, 59a; 3:47b; Vol. 7, pp. 295–96, nn. 124–25. On the association of King Solomon with *Shekhinah* (known as *the wisdom of Solomon*), see above, p. 35, n. 94.

110. **When a sublime virtuous person…** Through his merit, such a person can save the world from the harshness of *Shekhinah*. But if he falters, he becomes afraid even of *Tif'eret* (Justice) and certainly of *Shekhinah* (Righteousness).

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman: "Happy are the righteous, who turn the Attribute of Judgment into the Attribute of Compassion!"

111. **King David said at first…** Initially he was not afraid to be tested and judged by God, even by the harsh quality of *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness). But after he sinned with Bathsheba, he was afraid even of the milder quality of *Tif'eret* (known as Justice).

See *Zohar* 1:82a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 44–45 (54–55). On David's sin, see 2 Samuel 11–12. The full verse in Psalms 143 reads: *Do not enter* במשפט (*ve-mishpat*), *into judgment* [or: *into justice*], *with Your servant, for no living thing is acquitted before You*.

112. **When this צדק (*tsedeq*), Righteousness…** When *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness) is assuaged by *Tif'eret* (known as Justice), the letter ה (*he*) is added to Her name צדק (*tsedeq*), turning it into צדקה (*tsedaqah*).

113. **the judgment of Righteousness…** That is, the harsh quality of *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Such is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, "I have done no wrong."* Here, the second half of the verse implies that *Shekhinah* consumes the world with Her fiery judgment and then justifies the punishment that She has inflicted. This verse is often applied to Lilith, but occasionally to *Shekhinah* Herself. See above, p. 196, n. 28.

114. **From here on…** Rabbi Shim'on predicts that after he has died, everyone will be in grave danger.

According to rabbinic sources, Rabbi Shim'on claimed that he could protect the world from divine judgment until the Messiah arrives. See JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; BT *Sukkah* 45b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15.

On the image of "a deep pit," see BT *Ḥagigah* 5b; *Zohar* 2:263b (*Heikh*). For various interpretations of the first sentence, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

115. **Until here…** So far, Rabbi Shim'on has focused especially on the Holy Ancient One. Now he proceeds to

discuss *Ze'eir Anpin* in greater detail, especially those matters that were "not revealed… and not arranged" in the early gathering, *Idra Rabba*. On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1.

116. **Father and Mother are linked…** *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* are linked to the Holy Ancient One and its Concealed Brain. Although it might seem that the Holy Ancient One is distinct from the nine *sefirot* (from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*), "when matters are contemplated, all is the Ancient One alone"—that is, all these *sefirot* are "inseparable from It."

The Concealed Brain is such an integral part of the Holy Ancient One (contained within Its skull) that it is not distinct from It and cannot be said to "depend upon It." On the Concealed Brain, see above, notes 22–23.

On the concluding sentence, see *Zohar* 3:135b (*IR*). For Rabbi Shim'on's early discussion of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, beginning at note 59. On the inseparability of the Holy Ancient One and the nine *sefirot* (from *Ḥokhmah* to *Shekhinah*), see above at notes 18–19, 103–5. On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, note 20.

117. **one who has entered and emerged…** On this idiom, see above, note 74. On the expression "better for him if he had never been created!" see ibid.; above, pp. 503–4, n. 9. On the verse in Hosea, see above at note 74; *Zohar* 3:144a (*IR*).

118. ***In YHVH does my soul glory…*** The context in Psalms 34 (verses 3–4) reads: *In YHVH* תתהלל נפשי (*tithallel nafshi*), *does my soul glory. Let the lowly* [or: *humble*] *hear and rejoice. Exalt YHVH with me; let us extol His name together*. As Scholem suggests, Rabbi Shim'on may be playing on תתהלל (*tithallel*), *does glory*, and הלולא (*hillula*), "wedding celebration." See above, note 99.

119. **all these righteous and virtuous ones…** The souls of the righteous coming from Paradise to listen to Rabbi Shim'on's final teaching. See above, note 14. On the theme of the heavenly academy, see above, p. 54, n. 1.

120. ***For look, the kings have assembled…*** The context in Psalms describes a military victory over an invading force (led by several kings) attacking Jerusalem. Rabbi Shim'on links the verse with a passage in Genesis (36:31–39), which begins: *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the Children of Israel*. These latter kings do not constitute a dynasty, since none of the successors to the throne is a son of his predecessor. In seven consecutive verses Genesis records *And* [so-and-so] *died*, and in the *Zohar* these royal deaths represent the destruction of unviable emanations tainted by harsh Judgment (which is identified as *Edom*). Only of the final, eighth king is a wife mentioned and no death recorded.

The notion of earlier emanations that were destroyed recalls the rabbinic description of worlds that were previously destroyed. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:7, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "The blessed Holy One kept creating worlds and destroying them until He created these [i.e., heaven and earth]. Then He declared, 'These please Me, those do not.'" The theme of previous worlds that were destroyed and the *Zohar*'s interpretation of the passage in Genesis inspired Isaac Luria's theory of "the breaking of the vessels."

On the midrashic description and on the theme of the death of the kings, see Vol. 8, pp. 325–26, n. 18; Asulin, "Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah," 114–15, n. 37; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*. On the question of whether "the death of the kings" represents a catharsis of Divine Thought—purging it of harsh Judgment—see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:289–90; 2:458–59; Idel, "Ha-Maḥashavah ha-Ra'ah shel ha-El"; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 134–35; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 96; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*.

אֱדוֹם (*Edom*), "Edom," represents Judgment partly because the nearly identical word אָדוֹם (*adom*) means "red," the color of Judgment. In rabbinic literature, Edom often

represents Rome, and in medieval literature it often represents Christendom or Christian rule.

The context in Psalms (48:5–9) reads: *For look, the kings have assembled, passed onward together* [or: *one and all*]. *It is they who have seen and so been astounded; they were terrified, panicked. Shuddering seized them there, pangs like a woman in labor. With the east wind, You smashed the ships of Tarshish. As we heard, so we see, in the city of YHVH Tseva'ot, in the city of our God. May God make it stand firm forever! Selah*. The name *YHVH Tseva'ot* means *YHVH of armies* [or: *hosts*].

121. ***Passed onward together…*** This description of *the kings* in Psalm 48 now implies that they "*passed* away," matching the account in Genesis, which reports that each of seven consecutive *kings… died*. As explained in the preceding note, their deaths represent the destruction of unviable earlier emanations.

122. **they did not endure in their places…** The kings, or prior emanations, were not completely destroyed. Rather they did not endure, because the divine adornments "had not been arrayed," and there was no stable configuration of Male and Female.

The description of Jerusalem (*the city of our God*) refers to *Shekhinah*, who eventually emerged and did endure—alongside the Divine Male, symbolized by the eighth king: Hadar. The name of Hadar's wife, Mehetabel, also refers to *Shekhinah*; and her grandmother's name—מי זהב (*Mei zahav*), *Waters of Gold*—alludes to the higher sefirotic pair *Ḥesed* and *Din*, who are symbolized respectively by water and gold.

See *Zohar* 3:135b (*IR*), 142a (*IR*). On the significance of the union of male and female, see above, note 70. On Mehetabel, see Vol. 8, p. 382, n. 223; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 172–76, 227–28. On *Idra Rabba* (called here "the *Idra*"), see above, note 1. The verse in Genesis begins: *Baal-hanan son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead*.

123. **in the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Hamnuna…** According to this venerable source, the name of the eighth king—הדר (*Hadar*), *Hadar*—is identified with the word הדר (*hadar*), *majestic*, in a verse in Leviticus, describing four species of vegetation held on *Sukkot*: *You shall take for yourselves on the first day fruit of* עץ הדר (*ets hadar*), *a majestic tree, fronds of palms, and a branch of a thickly-leaved tree* [or: *branches of thickly-leaved trees*] *and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before YHVH your God seven days*. These four species became identified in rabbinic literature as the *etrog* (citron), *lulav* (palm branch), *hadas* (sprigs of myrtle), and *aravah* (willow twigs).

King *Hadar* and *ets hadar* (*a majestic tree*) both symbolize *Yesod*, the fruitful Divine Male, who is also called Righteous One. The verse in Psalms compares *the righteous one* with *a palm tree*. But the palm is both male and female; and its female aspect symbolizes *Shekhinah*, represented by Hadar's wife, Mehetabel. Thus the plural *fronds of palms* alludes to both *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, who are interdependent, becoming fruitful only by joining together.

Palm trees are dioecious: male and female flowers grow on separate trees. Male flowers produce pollen, while female flowers develop into fruit. As early as 2300 B.C.E., Mesopotamian farmers had learned to hang a male flower in a female tree to enhance pollination.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 40(41):1; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:11; BT *Pesaḥim* 56a; *Bahir* 117 (172), 139 (198), and Scholem's note, ad loc.; Rashi on *Pesaḥim* 56a, s.v. *Rav Aḥa*; *Tosafot, Menaḥot* 71a, s.v. *markivin*; *Zohar* 1:82a, 220b; 2:37b, 126a; 3:16a, 135b (*IR*), 143b (*IR*); *ZḤ* 50d; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 128.

On Rav Hamnuna, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, p. 38, n. 105.

124. **Daughter—*daughter of* מטרד (*Matred*)…** *Shekhinah* is pictured as the daughter of Father *Ḥokhmah*. His name implies that everyone strives to attain His Wisdom.

On the significance of the name Matred, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 83:4; *Zohar* 3:142a (*IR*). The context in Job (28:12–13) reads: *But wisdom, where is it found, and where is the place of understanding? No human knows its worth, and it cannot be found in the land of the living*. See *Zohar* 1:141b; 2:123a; 3:65b.

125. **daughter of Mother…** *Shekhinah* is the daughter of Mother *Binah*, and the latter is the source of harsh Judgment.

126. ***Daughter of* מי זהב (*Mei zahav*), *Waters of Gold*…** As explained above (note 122), this name alludes to *Ḥesed* (Love) and *Din* (Judgment), who are symbolized respectively by water and gold. *Shekhinah* draws sustenance from both of these divine qualities or "faces," which are associated respectively with the colors white and red.

127. **they did not gaze face-to-face…** The male and female divine aspects did not face one another; and without this harmony, nothing could endure.

See *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*); Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 176–201. On the primordial worlds, see above, note 120. The image of not gazing face-to-face recalls a rabbinic description of the cherubim. According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a, in the time of the Temple "whenever Israel fulfilled the will of the Omnipresent," the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and "whenever [Israel] did not," the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts.

See Rashbam, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:152b; 3:59a–b; Vol. 7, p. 382, n. 79. On not gazing face-to-face, see also *Zohar* 1:2b. Cf. below, note 217. On the significance of "face-to-face," see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 67–71, 105–7, 156. Cf. the midrashic theme of Adam's original androgynous nature and his "two faces," mentioned above, p. 736, n. 9.

On the image of the flashing sparks produced by the blacksmith's hammer, see BT *Shabbat* 88b, *Sanhedrin* 34a; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3; *Ma'yan ha-Ḥokhmah*, 5a; *Zohar* 1:156a; the passage from *Matnitin* (in Vatican MS 206)

quoted by Gottlieb, *Meḥqarim*, 180; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 183–87. See also *Zohar* 1:107b (Tos), 251a (*Mat*); 2:14a–b (*MhN*), 34b, 74a (*Mat*), 254b (*Heikh*); *ZḤ* 57a (*QhM*); Vol. 7, p. 250, n. 141. On the concluding clause, see Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 196–200.

128. **we have learned in our Mishnah…** Referring here not to the standard Mishnah, but rather to a secret, mystical source. See above, pp. 747–48, n. 48.

The clause "a spark emitted scintillas…" resembles the passage from *Matnitin* quoted by Gottlieb (mentioned in the preceding note), although the latter specifies "370 directions" rather than 320. The number 320 appears in another similar description in *Zohar* 2:254b (*Heikh*). On the number 370, see Vol. 8, p. 330, n. 27; p. 383, n. 224.

129. **the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness…** This renders בוצינא דקרדינותא (*Botsina de-qardinuta*). This primordial source, or divine tool, delineates the stages of emanation. As the paradoxical name suggests, its potent brilliance overwhelms comprehension.

The spark "mingled with pure air," and these two elements sweetened one another when Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah* united.

See *Zohar* 3:135b (*IR*); Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 202–4. On the terms *botsina de-qardinuta* and אוירא דכיא (*aveira dakhya*), "pure air (or ether)," see Vol. 8, p. 383, n. 224. Cf. *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:6: "Out of chaos He formed substance, making what is not into what is. He hewed enormous pillars out of *avir* (air, ether) that cannot be grasped."

130. **That Father is spirit…** Father *Ḥokhmah* derives from the Holy Ancient One (also called the Ancient of Days). In *Ḥokhmah* was concealed the pure air. When *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* united, a skull took shape, becoming the head of *Ze'eir Anpin*. The two sides of this skull were occupied respectively by *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

The name "Ancient of Days" appears in the divine vision described in Daniel 7:9 (quoted above, note 54). On the

divine skull, see *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:48b, 135b (*IR*).

131. **Just as the Holy Ancient One…** His three heads are described above at notes 23–24. His threefold nature is recapitulated in the triadic arrangement of the following *sefirot*: *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Da'at*; *Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tif'eret*; and *Netsaḥ, Hod, Yesod*. See above at note 29.

132. **Into this skull drips dew…** The dew of emanation trickles from the pure White Head of the Holy Ancient One into the skull of *Ze'eir Anpin*. There it appears in two colors: white (signifying the total Compassion of the Holy Ancient One) and red (signifying the quality of Judgment, which emerges in *Ze'eir Anpin*). The dew then proceeds to nourish *Shekhinah* (known as the Holy Apple Orchard).

See above, note 21. On the association of manna with dew, see above, p. 459, n. 532. On manna's being ground for the righteous in the afterlife, see above, p. 526, n. 73.

133. **the Ancient of All nourished them…** The Holy Ancient One nourished Israel directly from *Ze'eir Anpin*, whose core is *Tif'eret*, symbolized by *heaven*. Afterward (and continuing until now), they were nourished through the lower rung of *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, abundance of grain and new wine*. See above at note 21.

134. **This pertains to that time…** Only during Israel's wandering in the wilderness was nourishment provided miraculously and effortlessly by God. Ever since, providing nourishment has proven difficult.

See BT *Pesaḥim* 118a, in the name of Rabbi El'azar son of Azariah: "Human sustenance is as difficult [to provide] as splitting the Red Sea, as is written: *Who gives food to all flesh* (Psalms 136:25), and near it: *Who cut the Red Sea into pieces* (ibid., 13)."

According to BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a, in the name of Rava: "Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but

on מזלא (*mazzala*), destiny." Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets *mazzala* as referring to the long flowing body of the beard of the Holy Ancient One, based on the root נזל (*nzl*), "to flow." See above, note 50.

On the passage in *Pesaḥim*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97(98):3 (p. 1245); *Zohar* 1:207b; 2:52b, 170a–b, 218a; *ZḤ* 86d (*MhN, Rut*). For the wording "as difficult for (literally: before) the blessed Holy One," see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:4; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:4. Actually, these latter sources speak only of matchmaking, not of providing nourishment. See Vol. 5, pp. 494–95, n. 861.

135. **Ninety million worlds...** This immense number of worlds accompany the skull of *Ze'eir Anpin*. The two "directions" and "lights" correspond to *Ḥokhmah* (the source of *Ḥesed*) on the right and *Binah* (the source of *Gevurah*) on the left. On the ninety million worlds, see *Zohar* 3:135b (*IR*).

136. **When His face gazes...** When the face of *Ze'eir Anpin* gazes upon the face of the Holy Ancient One.

As explained above (note 21), the term זעיר אנפין (*Ze'eir Anpin*) means literally "short-tempered, irascible, impatient," taking a short time for one's nostrils to flare. In contrast, the highest sefirotic configuration (the Holy Ancient One) is known as אריך אנפין (*Arikh Anpin*), "slow to anger, long-suffering, forbearing, patient," taking a long time for one's nostrils to flare.

Here Rabbi Shim'on indicates that when *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) gazes at *Arikh Anpin* (the Long-suffering One), the former is suffused by the patient compassion of the latter, and He shares in the designation ארך אפין (*Erekh Appin*), "Long-suffering." Thereby, the world is forgiven and healed.

As mentioned above (note 21), the terms *Arikh Anpin* and *Ze'eir Anpin* are sometimes understood respectively as "the Large (or Vast) Countenance" and "the Small Countenance." The term appearing here—ארך אפין (*Erekh Appin*)—employs the Hebrew word ארך (*erekh*) instead of the

Aramaic אריך (*arikh*), and אפין (*appin*), which is a variant of אנפין (*anpin*).

Rabbi Shim'on associates ארך (*erekh*), "long," with another sense of the root ארך (*'rkh*): "to heal." See, e.g., Isaiah 58:8.

137. **In the hollow of the skull...** Of *Ze'eir Anpin*. The three lights derive from *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*. The first two lights are inherited by *Ze'eir Anpin* from His parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. The third (deriving from *Da'at*) includes the hidden sources of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, treasured away within the divine parents. So "if you say 'three,' there are four." These four qualities correspond to the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head.

See above, notes 88–90. The discrepancy between three and four cranial features recalls the fact that whereas Galen recognized four ventricles (or cavities) of the brain, some medieval scholars distinguished only three. See above, pp. 677–78, n. 52. On the four compartments of the *tefillah* of the head, see above, p. 586, n. 256; pp. 677–78, n. 52.

For various interpretations of this and the following two paragraphs, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital (in *Hadrat Melekh*); *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Bei'urei ha-Gera*; *Yafah Sha'ah*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

138. **These join with two brains...** These lights join two brains of *Ze'eir Anpin* (corresponding to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*), and the third brain (*Da'at*) includes them. The two colors are white and red, signifying *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, which *Ze'eir Anpin* has inherited respectively from the divine parents. See above at notes 88, 96.

139. **He is called *Da'at* in *Da'at*...** *Tif'eret* (the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*) inherits two aspects of *Da'at* (Knowledge)—namely the hidden sources of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, which are signified respectively by the colors white and red. These two aspects enable *Ze'eir Anpin* to weigh and determine various actions,

both positive and negative—as indicated by the verse in 1 Samuel, which reads: *For* אל דעות (*El de'ot*), *a God of knowledges, is YHVH*, ולו נתכנו עלילות (*ve-lo nitkenu alilot*), *and by Him actions are determined*. The concluding clause of this verse is traditionally read in this way; but it is written differently: ולא נתכנו עלילות (*ve-lo nitkenu alilot*), *and actions have no place*. This other version of the clause pertains not to *Ze'eir Anpin*, but rather to the Holy Ancient One—who manifests only oneness and Compassion, and who is not directly involved in distinguishing or determining various actions.

The context in 2 Samuel (22:26–27) reads: עם חסיד תתחסד (*Im ḥasid titḥassad*), *With the kind, You deal kindly*; עם גבור תמים (*im gibbor tamim*), *with the blameless hero, blamelessly. With the pure, You act purely; and with the perverse, You are wily*. Here, the first clause alludes to *Ḥesed*; and the following clause alludes to *Gevurah. Ze'eir Anpin* manifests and employs both of these qualities.

On the significance of the plural אל דעות (*El de'ot*), *a God of knowledges*, cf. above, note 95. Here, Rabbi Shim'on may be alluding to a negative sense of עלילות (*alilot*), "shameful actions; misconduct." See Deuteronomy 22:14, 17.

140. **Truly have the Companions established…** Whereas the verb אמר (*amar*), "to say," often pertains to normal or profane speech, the verb הגיד (*higgid*), "to tell," can imply a word of wisdom.

When Jacob met his wife-to-be, Rachel, he *told* her *that he was her father's brother* [or: *kin*] *and that he was Rebekah's son*. According to a midrashic tradition, Jacob was thereby implying that he was prepared for any circumstance. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 70:13: *"Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother*, [*and that he was Rebekah's son*]. If deception is required—*that he was her father's brother* [namely the kin of Laban the deceiver]. If righteousness is required—*and that he was Rebekah's son."*

According to Rabbi Shim'on, Jacob was declaring his sefirotic completeness. Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*, while Rachel symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Jacob specified *that he was Rebekah's son*, and not *Isaac's son*, to indicate that he did not derive from *Gevurah* (Isaac's *sefirah*). Rather, he balanced *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*—right and left—and he was complete.

According to *Zohar* 1:137a, Rebekah represents "mild Judgment." On Jacob's being "complete," see above, p. 358, n. 209.

On the deep significance of *higgid*, and the contrast between *amar* and *higgid*, see above, pp. 44–45, n. 124; Vol. 3, p. 421, n. 586; Vol. 4, pp. 431–32, n. 232. On the significance of *higgid* in the various verses quoted here from Deuteronomy and Genesis 49, see *Zohar* 1:86b, 234b; 2:79b–80a; 3:298b.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see BT *Megillah* 13b, *Bava Batra* 123a; *Kallah Rabbati* 3:14, all of which quote from the passage in 2 Samuel 22:26–27: *With the kind, You deal kindly; with the blameless hero, blamelessly. With the pure, You act purely; and with the perverse, You are wily*. See the preceding note.

141. **These colors spread throughout the body...** The colors white and red, signifying *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—which were concealed in *Da'at*. See above, notes 138–39. On the rest of this paragraph, see above, note 139.

142. **From the skull of the head...** Of *Ze'eir Anpin*. Whereas the hair on the head of the Holy Ancient One is white, the hair on *Ze'eir Anpin*'s head is black. Furthermore, the hair of the Holy Ancient One is untangled, whereas that of *Ze'eir Anpin* is "interwoven and intertwined." The strands of *Ze'eir Anpin*'s hair are also intertwined with radiance from Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah*.

The various brains include the aspects of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* (although the latter is not mentioned here explicitly)

and “the other brains,” namely the hidden sources of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* contained within *Da’at*. See above, notes 137–38.

On the contrast between God’s white and black hair, see BT *Ḥagigah* 14a: “One verse says, *His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece* (Daniel 7:9); yet it is written *his locks wavy, black as a raven* (Song of Songs 5:11)! There is no contradiction: here, referring to [God] sitting [in judgment]; there, to war. For a master has said: In sitting, none is more fitting than an old man, and in war none is more fitting than a young man.” On the white, untangled hair of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:128b (*IR*), 288b (*IZ*). On the black hair of *Ze’eir Anpin*, see *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:132a (*IR*), 136a (*IR*), 139a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*).

“Locks” renders קוצי (*qotsei*), which literally means “thorns” but is here associated with קווצות (*qevutsot*), “locks.” The latter appears in the description of the male lover in Song of Songs 5:11 (quoted in the preceding paragraph of this note). This biblical image is interpreted midrashically and mystically as alluding to the Divine Male.

On *qots* and *qevutsot*, see BT *Eruvin* 21b: “קווצותיו תלתלים (*Qevutsotav taltallim*), *His locks wavy* (Song of Songs 5:11). Rav Ḥisda said in the name of Mar Ukba, ‘This teaches that one can expound on every single קוץ (*qots*), stroke [of the letters of Torah], תילי תילים (*tillei tillim*), heaps and heaps, of laws.’” See Vol. 8, p. 332, n. 32.

143. **All those brains…** All the brains of *Ze’eir Anpin* are linked to the Supernal Brain of the Holy Ancient One. The hairs of *Ze’eir Anpin* represent flows of emanation emerging from the three cavities of His brains (corresponding to *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da’at*).

Upon these flowing hairs depend the details of purity and impurity mentioned in the Torah, the reasons for such laws, and numerous mysteries of Torah. According to rabbinic tradition, there are 620 letters in the Ten Commandments (as recorded in Exodus 20:2–14), and this total is equivalent to the numerical value of כתר (*keter*),

“crown.” Here, Rabbi Shim’on alludes to this tradition by quoting the beginning of the Ten Commandments (*I am YHVH your God*) and mentioning the word עטרא (*itra*), “crown.”

On the reasons relating to purity and impurity, see, e.g., *Midrash Tehillim* 12:4, in the name of Rabbi Yannai: “With every utterance that the blessed Holy One spoke to Moses, He offered forty-nine facets of ‘pure’ and forty-nine facets of ‘impure.’” These “pure” and “impure” facets refer respectively to forty-nine ways by which something can be proven pure (and thus permitted) and forty-nine ways by which the same thing can be proven impure (and thus forbidden). See *Zohar* 3:136a (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 387, n. 237.

144. **All those locks cover…** The sides of *Ze’eir Anpin*’s ears, hindering Him from hearing the prayers of Israel. Therefore Israel has to implore Him to *incline* His ear. Conversely, the hair of the Holy Ancient One does not cover His ears, so that prayer may enter.

The expression “curl the hair of the King’s head” refers to contemplative, mystical, or creative activity by which one can arrange the hair of *Ze’eir Anpin*. See *Zohar* 3:131a (*IR*), 139a (*IR*); above, p. 190, end of n. 10.

On the covered ears of *Ze’eir Anpin* and the uncovered ears of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:129a (*IR*), 136a (*IR*), 138a–b (*IR*), 294b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 31b, 34a. The verse in Kings reappears in Isaiah 37:17; cf. Daniel 9:18.

145. **In the part of the hair…** The path appearing there on the head of *Ze’eir Anpin* corresponds to the same path in the Holy Ancient One. See above, note 27; *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:129a (*IR*), 136a (*IR*).

Various types of angels are associated with the hair (and the commandments). First, Rabbi Shim’on mentions “the masters of wailing and howling,” namely forces of harsh Judgment who catch the wicked. See *Zohar* 3:136a (*IR*).

146. **And to the smooth ones…** To the smooth hairs adhere benevolent angels.

The concluding sentence means: "All these different angels appear because they are drawn from different brains."

On the phrase מאריהון דמתקלא (*mareihon de-matqala*), "masters of balance," see *Zohar* 1:223b; 2:122b; 3:136a (*IR*), 141a (*IR*). On the phrase רהטי מוחא (*rahatei moḥa*), "channels of the brain," see above, p. 678, n. 52; Vol. 8, p. 388, n. 239.

147. **From one brain…** From the brain of *Ḥokhmah* are conveyed the benevolent angels. From the brain of *Binah* are conveyed the harsh angels.

148. **במה (*Ba-meh*), *On what, they stumble…*** By employing the frequent midrashic formula "Do not read X but rather Y," Rabbi Shim'on creatively transforms this clause into "באימא (*be-imma*), *on Mother, they stumble*." This new wording means that the wicked stumble on, and so are punished by, harsh forces stemming from the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—which emanates from Mother *Binah*.

149. **From the third brain…** From the brain of *Da'at* (which mediates between *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*) are conveyed, appropriately, angels who manifest both benevolent and harsh qualities, depending on human actions.

The phrase "in the middle" means either "in the middle of the hair" or "neither completely coarse nor completely smooth." The term "masters of qualities" renders דמדין מאריהון (*mareihon de-middin*), "masters of *middin*," likely deriving from the verbal root מדד (*mdd*), "to measure." See Vol. 8, p. 346, n. 81. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Level the path of your foot, and all your ways will be sure*.

150. **The forehead of the skull…** Of *Ze'eir Anpin*. See *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:136b (*IR*).

151. **red as a rose…** The color of Judgment. When the compassionate forehead of the Holy Ancient One illumines

the forehead of *Ze'eir Anpin*, Judgment is assuaged and red turns into white.

See above at note 32; *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*). Cf. Isaiah 1:18: *If your sins are like scarlet, they will turn white as snow*.

152. **In the Book of *Aggadta*...** According to this venerable source, if one lives virtuously, then the forehead of the Holy Ancient One illumines the forehead of *Ze'eir Anpin* and Judgment is overcome. Otherwise, the letters of word מצח (*metsaḥ*), "forehead," are rearranged, forming the catastrophic word מחץ (*maḥats*), "smashes"—implying that the illumination from the higher forehead disappears, and the lower forehead of *Ze'eir Anpin* conveys harsh Judgment, striking at those who deserve punishment.

The Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Sava is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. On this library, see above, p. 165, n. 38.

The context in Numbers (24:17–18) reads: *I see him, but not now. I gaze on him, but not soon. A star marches forth from Jacob, a meteor* [or: *a scepter*] *arises from Israel*, ומחץ (*u-maḥats*), *and smashes, the brow* [or: *the border*] *of Moab, the pate of* [or: *and razes*] *all the Sethites. Edom will be dispossessed, Seir dispossessed by its enemies; but Israel performs valiantly*.

153. **with consecutive letters it is called נצח (*netsaḥ*), Victory...** In the word מצח (*metsaḥ*), "forehead," if the letter מ (*mem*) is replaced by the immediately following letter in the alphabet—נ (*nun*)—then מצח (*metsaḥ*) turns into נצח (*netsaḥ*). This latter term means "eternity, endurance, glory, victory."

Although the term *Netsaḥ* normally applies to a particular *sefirah*, "there are (various) *netsaḥim* spreading throughout the (divine) body."

Normally, during the time of *minḥah* (the afternoon service)—as evening approaches—Judgment is aroused. But

on Sabbath afternoon, the מצח (*metsaḥ*), "forehead," of the Holy Ancient One is revealed, achieving נצח (*netsaḥ*), "victory," over harsh Judgment. See above, note 33.

On *metsaḥ, netsaḥ*, and *netsaḥim*, see *Zohar* 3:136b (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 391, n. 251; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 39b; idem, *Sha'arei Tsedeq*, 18a.

154. **From this forehead...** Namely, the forehead of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

The numerical value of the initial letters of the words איכה ידע אל ויש דעה בעליון (*Eikhah yada El ve-yesh de'ah ve-Elyon*), *How could God know? Is there knowledge with the Most High?* equals twenty-four. See *Nitsotsei Orot*. On the twenty-four courts, see *Zohar* 3:136b (*IR*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 39b.

155. **But there are twenty!...** According to a certain tradition, there are twenty (and not twenty-four) courts deriving from the forehead of *Ze'eir Anpin*. The extra four correspond to the four types of capital punishment recorded in rabbinic literature: stoning, burning, beheading, and strangulation. See M *Sanhedrin* 7:1.

According to rabbinic tradition, a Jewish male, upon reaching the age of thirteen, is bound by the commandments and liable to punishment by a court; at the age of twenty, he becomes liable to punishment from heaven. See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 24:16: "The Higher Court punishes only from twenty years and higher, whereas the Lower Court from thirteen years and one day."

See Numbers 14:29 (where all members of the Israelite militia—men over twenty years old—are condemned to die in the desert); M *Niddah* 5:6; BT *Shabbat* 89b, *Bava Batra* 155a; *Tanḥuma, Qoraḥ* 3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:4; *Bahir* 135 (195); *Zohar* 1:118b–119a; 2:97b–98a, 113a–b, 186a–b, 248b (*Heikh*); *ZḤ* 20a (*MhN*), 43d; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

According to an esoteric tradition ("in our Concealed Mishnah"), the larger number of courts corresponds to the twenty-four books of the Bible (referred to here loosely as "the Torah"). Fittingly, these twenty-four courts render

judgment upon those who have transgressed the laws and traditions recorded in all twenty-four biblical books. On the term "our Concealed Mishnah," cf. above, pp. 747–48, n. 48.

156. **The eyes of the head…** Of *Ze'eir Anpin*. To the wicked, it seems that God is not watching them and that His eyes are closed in sleep; but He is really awake. Rabbi Shim'on plays on יונים (*yonim*), *doves*, and the causative conjugation of the verbal root ינה (*ynh*), meaning "to cheat, deceive." The appearance of God's eyes is deceptive.

The phrase "eyes that sleep" may also imply that God temporarily removes His providence, due to human wickedness. See *Or Yaqar*, who quotes Deuteronomy 31:18: *As for Me, I will surely hide My face on that day for all the evil that they have done*.

On the eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin*, see *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:136b–137b (*IR*). On the wicked's imagining that God is asleep, cf. *Ester Rabbah* 7:12. See also 1 Kings 18:27. On the play on *yonim* and *tonu*, see *Zohar* 2:73a (*RR*); cf. 2:199a. See also above, p. 196, n. 28.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His eyes are like doves by streams of water, bathing in milk, sitting by a brimming pool*. See above, note 40.

157. **The enhancement above the eye…** The eyebrows, whose hairs are symmetrical. The "masters of watchfulness" are angels poised to attack sinners. In a time of favor, when the eyes of the Holy Ancient One gaze upon the eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin*, these angels are bound in chains. When this mutual gaze is lacking, the angels "rise from their chains."

On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, note 20. The phrase "masters of watchfulness" renders מארי דאשגחותא (*marei de-ashgaḥuta*). See *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:136b (*IR*). On the term *ashgaḥuta*, see above, note 50.

158. **the covering over the eyes…** The eyelids. The "shield-bearing warriors" are forces of Judgment. The "eyes

of *YHVH*" are angels appointed to examine human actions.

When the eyelids of *Ze'eir Anpin* open, His eyes revolve and gaze at the constantly open eye of the Holy Ancient One. Then, any forces accusing or threatening Israel are overcome.

On the constantly open eye of the Holy Ancient One, see above, note 39. On the Holy Ancient One and *Ze'eir Anpin* gazing at one another, see above, note 42. The full verse in Psalms actually reads: *Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Rouse Yourself*. See *Zohar* 3:136b (*IR*).

159. **Four colors appear in those eyes…** Namely, black, red, green, and white. See *Zohar* 3:136b–137b (*IR*).

On the association of tefillin with the eyes, see Deuteronomy 6:8: *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes*. On the four compartments of the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head, see above, p. 586, n. 256; pp. 677–78, n. 52. On "the channels of the brain," see above, note 146.

160. **Seven called 'eyes of watchfulness'…** Seven angels appointed to examine human actions emerge from the black pupil of the eye. See *Zohar* 3:136b–137a (*IR*). The phrase "those colors" refers to the other three colors: red, green, and white.

161. **From the red emerge others…** This color symbolizes *Din* (Judgment).

In describing God's providential eyes, Chronicles employs a feminine verb: *The eyes of YHVH* משוטטות (*meshotetot*), *are ranging, over the whole earth*—whereas the prophet Zechariah employs a masculine verb: *These seven are the eyes of YHVH*, משוטטים (*meshotetim*), *ranging, over the whole earth* (Zechariah 4:10). According to Rabbi Shim'on, the feminine verb *meshotetot* is associated with Judgment.

On *meshotetot* and *meshotetim*, see *Zohar* 1:241a–b; 2:107a, 202a; 3:130a (*IR*). The Hebrew noun עין (*ayin*), "eye," is always feminine in the Bible, except twice in Zechariah (this verse and 3:9).

162. **From the green emerge others…** This more harmonious color symbolizes a balance between *Ḥesed* and *Din*. The masculine verb *meshotetim* is associated with Compassion or balance.

See the preceding note. The verse in Job 34 reads: *For His eyes are upon a person's ways, and all his steps does He see*.

163. **Then all these three colors are bathed…** The colors black, red, and green are bathed in the white (which derives from the white of the constantly open eye of the Holy Ancient One).

164. **As for all colors below…** Here on earth, no one can turn black, red, or green into white. But above, when *Ze'eir Anpin* gazes into the open eye of the Holy Ancient One, all those three colors are transformed into white.

165. **His eyelids do not subside…** The eyelids of *Ze'eir Anpin* do not close entirely when the colors of the eye need to gaze upon the open eye of the Holy Ancient One. Rather, they flutter, allowing the pure whiteness from above to gradually suffuse them.

The full verse in Ezekiel (describing the angelic beings carrying the divine Chariot-Throne) reads: *The living beings darting back and forth like a flash of lightning*. Cf. above, note 24.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital (in *Hadrat Melekh*); *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Bei'urei ha-Gera*; *Yafah Sha'ah*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam*; *The Anatomy of God; Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

166. ***Your eyes will see Jerusalem…*** Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes between the names *Jerusalem* and *Zion*. The first refers to *Shekhinah*'s quality of Judgment; the second, to Her compassionate aspect or condition. Because *Shekhinah* (as Jerusalem) is characterized by Judgment, She needs *the eyes of YHVH* to gaze upon Her all year long, conveying Compassion to Her.

Isaiah 1:21 links Jerusalem with צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*, which signifies Judgment. Conversely, Isaiah 1:27 associates Zion with משפט (*mishpat*), *justice*, which represents Compassion. On the distinction between *Jerusalem* and *Zion*, see above, p. 685, n. 76. On *tsedeq* and *mishpat*, see above, note 106.

According to the simple sense of the verse in Deuteronomy, *upon her* means "upon the land of Israel" (mentioned at the beginning of the verse). Here, Rabbi Shim'on applies this phrase to *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the land of Israel).

The full verse in Isaiah 33 reads: *Gaze upon Zion, our city of assembly; your eyes will see Jerusalem a tranquil abode* [meaning: *as a tranquil abode*], *a tent not to be packed up, whose pegs will never be pulled out, and none of whose ropes will snap*. Isaiah 1:21, bemoaning the lost glory of Jerusalem, reads: צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness* [or: *justice*], *lodged in her*. Isaiah 1:27 reads in full: *Zion will be redeemed by justice, and her repentant ones* [or: *those who return to her*] בצדקה (*bi-tsdaqah*), *by righteousness*. On the contrast between צדק (*tsedeq*) and צדקה (*tsedaqah*), see above, note 112.

167. **עיניך (*Einekha*), *Your eyes...*** In this verse from Isaiah, the Masoretic spelling of עיניך (*einekha*), *your eyes*, actually includes both *yods*. But here Rabbi Shim'on, being playfully creative, claims that it is "spelled עינך (*einekha*), *your eye,*" without the second *yod*. This single eye is "that of the... Holy Ancient One," who will one day *see Jerusalem*, that is, it will gaze directly upon *Shekhinah*. Now, however, both *eyes of YHVH*—namely of *Ze'eir Anpin*—gaze upon Her. Since *Ze'eir Anpin* alternates between Compassion and Judgment, this explains why Jerusalem has sometimes flourished and sometimes been destroyed.

On the supposed spelling עינך (*einekha*), *your eye*, see *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:137a (*IR*). On the phenomenon of Zoharic biblical quotations that differ from the Masoretic

text, see Vol. 7, p. 8, n. 24. For the full verse in Isaiah 33, see the preceding note.

168. **מרשית (*Me-reshit*), *from the beginning of…*** Normally the word ראשית (*reshit*), "beginning," is spelled with an א (*alef*). The lack of this letter here alludes to a diminished divine gaze, which weakens the endurance of Jerusalem (or the land of Israel), "this one below."

The phrase "concerning above" apparently refers to *Shekhinah*; and the verse in Lamentations now implies that She (symbolized by *earth*) has been *cast down from heaven* (symbolizing Her partner, *Tif'eret*, the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*). The separation of the divine couple is due to the dominance of Judgment, signified by *darkness*, which covers the eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has cast down from heaven to earth* תפארת ישראל (*tif'eret yisra'el*), *the beauty* [or: *splendor*] *of Israel*. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, this verse is often interpreted as: תפארת ישראל (*Tif'eret Yisra'el*), *The beauty of Israel, has cast down earth* [symbolizing *Shekhinah*] *from heaven* [symbolizing *Tif'eret* together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him]. See *Zohar* 1:219a, 238a, 242b; 2:175a; 3:59b, 72a, 74a.

On the significance of the spelling מרשית (*me-reshit*) without the usual silent א (*alef*), see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 11:12; JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57b; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *I clothe the heavens in blackness* [or: *darkness*], *and make sackcloth their covering*.

For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Yafah Sha'ah*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam; Sha'arei ha-Idra; Matoq mi-Devash*.

169. **From what place?…** The eyes of *Ze'eir Anpin* gaze upon *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Jerusalem) from the perspective of *Binah*, who is the source of Judgment, although She Herself is not identified with Judgment. This

quality of Judgment is symbolized by the lack of the letter א (*alef*).

170. **at *the end of the year*, surely…** Alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is often dominated by Judgment, which is associated with Her name צדק (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness*. See above, notes 106, 166.

171. **א (*Alef*) on its own…** This letter symbolizes the Holy Ancient One, who is pictured as male and described by the masculine adjective ראשון (*rishon*), "first." When this *alef* joins "another place—namely *Ḥokhmah*—it is called ראשית (*reshit*), "beginning," which, although referring to Father *Ḥokhmah* is actually a feminine noun, perhaps (kabbalistically) because *Ḥokhmah* receives passively from the Holy Ancient One, or because *Ḥokhmah* joins with Mother *Binah*.

Ze'eir Anpin does not gaze upon Jerusalem (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) from the perspective of *Ḥokhmah*—ראשית (*reshit*)—but rather from the perspective of *Binah* (the source of Judgment), who is called רשית (*reshit*), spelled without the *alef*. Consequently, Jerusalem has been destroyed and *Shekhinah* wanders in exile with Her people. However, in the time to come, the Holy Ancient One—known as ראשון (*rishon*), *first*—will Himself gaze upon and redeem *Shekhinah*. See above, notes 168–69.

172. **The nose of *Ze'eir Anpin*…** The nose is the most distinctive feature of the face. Whereas the nostrils of the Holy Ancient One convey the breath of life for all, those of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) flare with smoke.

See above, notes 46–47. On the clause "the whole face is thereby recognized," see M *Yevamot* 16:3: "Evidence [of the identity of a corpse] may not be given except from [proof provided by] the face together with the nose." See Naḥmanides on Leviticus 21:18; *Zohar* 2:122b, 177b (*SdTs*); 3:130a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*), 137b (*IR*).

173. **In this smoke intermingle all colors…** Namely, the three colors that characterize *Ze'eir Anpin*: black, red, and green. See above, notes 159–64; *Zohar* 3:137b (*IR*).

The wrathful powers of harsh Judgment mingling in the multi-colored smoke are assuaged only by the smoke of sacrifices offered on the altar in the Temple.

On the impact of sacrifices, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:878–90; Vol. 3, p. 493, n. 863. On the effect of sacrificial smoke, see *Zohar* 1:45b (*Heikh*), 51a–b, 70a–b, 176b, 244a, 247b; 2:122b, 130a, 141a, 162a, 242b, 259b (*Heikh*); 3:30b, 32b, 138a (*IR*).

The verse in Genesis describes God's response to Noah's sacrifices following the Flood, when He promised to never again destroy all life. It begins: *YHVH smelled* ריח הניחח (*reiaḥ ha-niḥoaḥ*), *the soothing* [or: *pleasing*] *aroma*. See *Zohar* 1:70a; 2:122b; 3:138a (*IR*).

The verse in Psalms reads: *Who can utter* [or: *declare*] גבורות (*gevurot*), *the mighty acts of* [or: *the powers of*], *YHVH or declare* [or: *announce*] *all His praise?* See *Zohar* 2:83a; 3:137b (*IR*).

174. **From both nostrils of this nose…** Fire (or fiery smoke) issues from both nostrils of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One). However, these flaring nostrils are soothed by the corresponding fire and smoke of Israel's sacrificial offerings.

From a higher perspective, the nose of the Holy Ancient One soothes the flaring nostrils of *Ze'eir Anpin* with a calming breath. On the verse in Isaiah, see above, note 47.

175. **The nose of the Holy Ancient One is** אריך **(*arikh*), long…** The Holy Ancient One is also known as אנפין אריך (*Arikh Anpin*)—Hebrew ארך אפים (*Erekh Appayim*)—which means "slow to anger, long-suffering, patient," literally taking a "long" time for His "nostrils" to flare. Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *Erekh Appayim* also as "Long-nosed," based on Hebrew אף (*aph*), "nose, anger," which is etymologically and semantically related to Aramaic אנף (*anaph*), "face." (The Hebrew plural אפים [*appayim*] can mean both "nostrils" and "face.")

In contrast, the title זעיר אנפין (*Ze'eir Anpin*)—literally "of a small face"—means "short-tempered," taking a short time for His nostrils to flare. Here, Rabbi Shim'on construes *Ze'eir Anpin* as "Small-nosed, Short-nosed."

See *Zohar* 3:137b–138a (*IR*); above, note 21. In the concluding sentence, the term *Idra* refers to the earlier gathering (known as *Idra Rabba*). See above, note 1. The expression "were aroused" implies that the Companions were stimulated to discuss and explore the meaning of Rabbi Shim'on's teaching. See above, p. 312, n. 53.

176. **In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava…** According to this venerable source, only one nostril of *Ze'eir Anpin*'s nose spews smoke and fire; from the other one issues a calm breath. These contrasting elements reflect respectively left (signifying *Din*) and right (signifying *Ḥesed*).

The verse from Hosea actually describes the future condition of Israel. Here, it implies that *Ze'eir Anpin*'s breath smells sweet. In Kabbalah, *Lebanon* often symbolizes *Ḥokhmah*.

The verse in Song of Songs is addressed to the female character. Here, it alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is associated with Judgment. If Her breath is sweet, then the breath of *Ze'eir Anpin* (who balances Judgment with Love) is surely sweet.

On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, p. 618, n. 353. On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, pp. 261–62, n. 48. On Rav Hamnuna's teaching here, see Asulin, "Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah," 161–67.

177. ***YHVH smelled*** ריח הניחח **(*reiaḥ ha-niḥoaḥ*), *the soothing aroma…*** Rabbi Shim'on focuses on the double ח (*ḥet*) in the word ניחח (*niḥoaḥ*), *soothing* (or *pleasing*). One signifies the נייחא (*neyaḥa*), "satisfaction," that the Holy Ancient One has been revealed. The other signifies the assuagement produced by the smoke and fire of the sacrificial offerings below. On this verse, see above, note 173.

178. **Two ears…** Each of the two ears of *Ze'eir Anpin* hears good and evil. They function together and "are considered one," as implied by the singular wording *Your ear* in the verse from Kings.

The spiral structure of the inner ear (the cochlea) forces the sound to enter the brain slowly, enabling a deliberate process of discernment.

See *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:138a (*IR*). On the anatomy and physiology of the ear as it was understood in the thirteenth century, see Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* 9, 28d–29a. Cf. Ibn Ezra (short) on Exodus 21:24. On the verse in Kings, see above, note 144.

179. **all the winged beings…** Angels who convey human voices above.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *Even in your mind* [or: *on your couch*] *revile not a king, and in your sleeping chambers revile not a rich man, for a bird of heaven will carry the sound* [or: *the voice*], *and a winged being will tell the word*. According to a midrashic interpretation, *a winged being* means "an angel." But Rabbi Shim'on raises a difficulty: The beginning of the verse mentions a purely mental activity—*Even in your mind revile not a king*. And Rabbi Shim'on assumes that the following clause—*and in your sleeping chambers revile not a rich man*—likewise refers to negative thoughts, not speech. So he asks, "What sound is there here?"

On the verse in Ecclesiastes as alluding to angels, see *Devarim Rabbah* 6:10; Rashi on the verse; *Zohar* 1:34b, 92a; 2:241b; 3:138a (*IR*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 203.

180. **whatever a person thinks…** Almost inevitably, a person will express his thoughts in words, even if he does so unintentionally. Such words are conveyed by angels to the ears of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

On thoughts not being effective until they are expressed verbally, see JT *Terumot* 3:8, 42b; *Nazir* 5:1, 53d. On words

piercing the atmosphere (or splitting the heavens), see above, p. 662, n. 11. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH heard the sound* [or: *the voice*] *of your words when you spoke to me, and YHVH said to me, "I have heard the sound of the words of this people that they spoke to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken*." Cf. Deuteronomy 1:34.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *The people were complaining bitterly in the ears of YHVH, and YHVH heard and His wrath* [or: *His nose*] *flared, and the fire of YHVH blazed against them, consuming the edge of the camp*.

181. **Therefore every prayer…** The words of prayer must be articulated, though quietly. Such whispered words turn into a voice and are then grasped by the angel Sandalphon, who fastens them to God's crown (or weaves them into a divine crown).

According to BT *Berakhot* 31a (in the name of Rav Hamnuna): "One who prays must articulate the words with his lips." Cf. JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a.

On words of prayer adorning God, see *Shemot Rabbah* 21:4: "Rabbi Pinḥas said in the name of Rabbi Me'ir, and Rabbi Yirmeyah said in the name of Rabbi Abba, 'When Israel prays, you do not find them all praying as one, but rather each assembly prays on its own, one after the other. When they have all finished, the angel appointed over prayers gathers all the prayers offered in all the synagogues and fashions them into crowns, which he places on the head of the blessed Holy One.'" In various texts, this angel is identified as Sandalphon. See above, p. 662, n. 11.

182. **From the three cavities…** Of the brain(s) of *Ze'eir Anpin*, which correspond to *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*. From these cavities "drips a trickle," namely the fluid of the inner ear. Rabbi Shim'on describes this fluid as *the stream of* כרית (*kerit*), *Cherith*, which he associates with the word כרותא (*keruta*), "hollowing out; digging," namely "a channel of the ears."

Technically, the fluid of the inner ear moves in response to sound waves, and that motion stimulates receptor cells, which in turn translate the motion into electrical nerve impulses that are transmitted to the brain. The brain interprets these electrical signals as sound.

See *Zohar* 3:138a (*IR*). On the three cavities of the brain(s), see above, notes 137, 143. The full verse in Kings (spoken by God to the prophet Elijah) reads: *Go from here and turn you eastward and hide* בנחל כרית (*be-naḥal kerit*), *in the wadi* [or: *stream*] *of Cherith, which faces the Jordan*. On the association of ears with the verb כרה (*krh*), "to hollow out; dig," see Psalms 40:7: כרית (*Karita*), *You dug open, ears for me*, meaning "You granted me an acute power of listening" or "You listened attentively to me." The verse in Job reads: *For the ear tests words, as* [literally: *and*] *the palate tastes in eating*.

183. **Upon this cavity of the ears…** After the human voice enters the ears of *Ze'eir Anpin*, some of it may enter the cavities of His eyes, stimulating divine tears. Some of the voice may also enter the divine nostrils (pictured as cavities of an armoire), stimulating them to flare in wrath.

See *Zohar* 3:138a–b (*IR*). On the term פרדשקא (*pardashqa*), "armoire," see above, note 46. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, note 180.

184. ***Keep your tongue from evil…*** The context in Psalms (34:13–14) reads: *Who is the man desiring life, loving many days to see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit*.

185. **To this ear is attributed שמיעה (*shemi'ah*), hearing…** Rabbi Shim'on demonstrates that the verb שמע (*shama*), "to hear"—which can also mean "to understand"—is associated with all three brains of *Ze'eir Anpin*, corresponding to *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*.

King Solomon asked God to grant him לב שומע (*lev shome'a*), *an understanding* [literally: *a hearing*] *heart*; and several chapters later Scripture records: *YHVH gave* חכמה

(*ḥokhmah*), *wisdom, to Solomon as He had spoken to him* (1 Kings 5:26).

The fact that the verb *shama* can also mean "to understand" demonstrates its association with *Binah* (Understanding). The words spoken by the young Samuel to God—*Speak, for Your servant* שומע (*shome'a*), *is listening*—imply that Samuel "understands" what he is hearing. The full verse in 2 Kings reads: *Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebnah and Joah with him, said to Rabshakeh, "Speak, please, to your servants in Aramaic, for we* שומעים (*shome'im*), *understand it* [literally: *hear*]; *and do not speak to us in Judean in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."*

The verse in Proverbs—שמע (*Shema*), *Hear, my son…*—implies "Know, my son," demonstrating the association between the verb *shama* and *Da'at* (Knowledge).

See *Zohar* 3:138b (*IR*). The full verse in 1 Kings reads: *May You give Your servant an understanding* [literally: *a hearing*] *heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil; for who can judge this vast people of Yours?*

The full verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH came and stood poised and called as on each time before, "Samuel, Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."* The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Hear, my son, and take in my sayings, that the years of your life may be many.*

186. ***Incline Your ear…*** On this verse, see above, notes 144, 178.

187. **In this ear are suspended supernal mysteries…** The spiral structure of *Ze'eir Anpin*'s inner ear helps to conceal these mysteries. Rabbi Shim'on plays on two related senses of the word עקימא (*aqima*): "winding" and "crooked."

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The counsel* [or: *secret*] *of YHVH is for those who revere* [or: *fear*] *Him, and to them He reveals His covenant*. On this verse, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 49:2; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 19, *Vayera* 5–6, *Ḥayyei*

Sarah 4, *Vayḥi* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 23; *Vayera* 6, *Vayḥi* 13; *Midrash Tehillim* 25:13; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1, intro; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 526; *Zohar* 1:37b, 73a, 95a, 236b; 2:75a, 234a, 237b; 3:43b (*Piq*), 48a, 79a, 92a, 127b (*IR*), 141b (*IR*), 142b (*IR*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 339; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 226–28.

188. **Those who are crooked in their ways…** Such people eagerly gobble up secrets and quickly divulge them to others.

Revealing secrets to those who are unworthy is tantamount to murder or idolatry. According to "our Mishnah," the verse from Leviticus equates being *a slanderer* with causing bloodshed (standing *over the blood of your fellow*) and committing idolatry (denying that *I am* YHVH).

According to the simple sense of the verse from Leviticus, *you shall not stand over the blood of your fellow* means "You shall not stand by—idle or aloof, not intervening—when your fellow's blood is (about to be) spilled."

On the link between *You shall not go about as a slanderer* and causing bloodshed, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 19:16; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 9, p. 170; *Derekh Erets, pereq ha-yotse* 13; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:127; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot* 7:1. On the lethal power of (evil) speech, see also Proverbs 18:21; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 9, p. 172; BT *Arakhin* 15b; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 52:2. On the link between evil speech and denying God, see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 9, p. 170; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 52:2.

The expression "our Mishnah" refers here not to the standard Mishnah, but rather to a secret source. See above, note 128; pp. 747–48, n. 48.

189. ***The faithful of spirit conceals a word…*** Such a person demonstrates that his *spirit* derives from the divine realm—or specifically from *Shekhinah*—known as "faith." Conversely, one who divulges secrets demonstrates that his soul does not derive from the body of *Ze'eir Anpin*. Since he "does not derive from the secret realm," he is incapable of keeping a secret.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *One who goes about gossiping* [or: *slandering*] *reveals a secret, but the faithful of spirit conceals a matter* [or: *a word*]. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:71b; 3:128a (*IR*).

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The righteous will inherit the land and dwell forever upon it*. Here, *the land* symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Cf. M *Sanhedrin* 10:1: "All of Israel have a share in the world that is coming, as is said: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified* (Isaiah 60:21)."

190. **His face, like two offerings of spices…** The cheeks of *Ze'eir Anpin* are described as "offerings of spices," based on the description of the beloved in Song of Songs 5:13: *his cheeks like a bed of spices* [or: *balsam*].

These distinctive features of His face testify to the qualities that He has received from Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah*. The cheeks' white and red colors signify *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, which derive respectively from the two parents.

See above at notes 88, 96, 138. On the phrase "offerings of spices," cf. *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdTs*); 3:131a, 133b, 134b, 139a, 140b (all *IR*).

191. **In our Mishnah…** According to this venerable source, white (signifying *Ḥesed*) and red (signifying *Gevurah*) are extremely distant from one another; yet within *Ze'eir Anpin* these two colors (and qualities) blend. The phrase "on the white side" implies that *Ḥesed* (ideally) dominates, which is especially so when the Holy Ancient One illumines *Ze'eir Anpin*. However, when human wickedness empowers the

forces of Judgment, then *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—dominates, and the color red "spreads over the face."

The expression "our Mishnah" refers here not to the standard Mishnah, but rather to a secret source. See above, note 188; pp. 747–48, n. 48. The term "parasangs" appears frequently in *Shi'ur Qomah*, the early mystical text describing the immense dimensions of the various divine limbs. The Persian parasang equals about 3.5 modern miles.

The term "leprosy" renders סגירותא (*segiruta*), "closing" (or "being closed off, confinement, quarantine"), reflecting the fact that the afflicted person was confined (as described in Leviticus 13:4–5, 21, 26, 31, 33, 50, 54). The *Zohar* borrows the word *segiruta* from *Targum Onqelos*, where it often renders צרעת (*tsara'at*), "leprosy" (more precisely, "a scaly skin disease"). On the term *tsara'at*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774–76, 816–26.

192. **Thus it testifies to all things...** The dominant color in the face of *Ze'eir Anpin* indicates whether *Ḥesed* or *Din* dominates.

193. **In these offerings of spices...** In the cheeks of *Ze'eir Anpin*, the beard begins to appear.

See *Zohar* 3:139a (*IR*). On the phrase "offerings of spices," see above, note 190. On the black hair of *Ze'eir Anpin* (as opposed to the white hair of the Holy Ancient One), see above, note 142.

194. **Anointing oil of the supernal beard...** The radiant flow from the beard of the Holy Ancient One proceeds to the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*, assuaging the latter's harshness. The latter displays nine *tiqqunin*, "enhancements" (or "features"), whereas the former displays thirteen. When the Holy Ancient One's thirteen *tiqqunin* stream into the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*, the latter's *tiqqunin* now number twenty-two, which is the numerical equivalent of the word בך (*bekha*), *by you*.

The clause in Genesis—בך (*Bekha*), *By you, shall Israel bless*—now implies: *By* the power of the Holy Ancient One

shall Israel (namely *Ze'eir Anpin*, who is called "Israel unspecified") be blessed. The name Israel applies to *Ze'eir Anpin* because the latter's core is *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), and who is signified by Jacob (also known as Israel).

The association of oil with the beard derives from Psalms 133:2 (quoted below at note 204): *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard*, etc. On the nine enhancements and thirteen enhancements, see above, notes 26, 51. On the combination of the two sets of enhancements, see *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:139a (*IR*), 146b. Cf. 2:175b; Vol. 5, p. 524, n. 952. On the term תקונא (*tiqquna*), "enhancement, adornment, array, arrangement, configuration, feature," see above, notes 20, 51. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 3:119b, 130a (*IR*).

195. **The enhancements of the beard...** Of *Ze'eir Anpin*. These were described in great detail in the earlier gathering, *Idra Rabba*. (See *Zohar* 3:139a–141a [*IR*]; Vol. 8, pp. 408–25.) Now, as Rabbi Shim'on is about to depart from the world, he wishes to reveal new insights, so that he will not enter the world that is coming deficiently or "in shame"—that is, not having revealed as much wisdom on earth as he could.

The nine *tiqqunin* (enhancements, features) can be divided into two groups: six and three (as explained below). The first enhancement was initiated by a spark shooting forth from the primordial divine potency, called דקרדינותא בוצינא (*botsina de-qardinuta*), the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness. This feature of the beard consists of hair extending from in front of the ears to the top lip of the mouth. See *Zohar* 3:139a (*IR*).

On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1. On the theme of entering without shame, see above, note 9. On the division of nine enhancements into six and three, see *Zohar* 3:139b (*IR*). On the term *botsina de-qardinuta*, Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, see above, note 129.

196. **This enhancement originates...** This first feature of the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* originates in the *mazzala* (the flowing body of the beard) of the Holy Ancient One. The spring of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) derives from the *mazzala*. When Mother *Binah* flows, She absorbs "pure air" and obtains whiteness from Father *Ḥokhmah*. The spark (mentioned in the preceding paragraph) mingles with the pure air (and *Ḥokhmah* merges with *Binah*), generating the first enhancement.

On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50. On the spark mingling with pure air, see above, note 129.

197. **When necessary...** When mercy is required, Father *Ḥokhmah* dominates, since He is characterized by Compassion. When vengeance is required, Mother *Binah* dominates, since She is the source of harsh Judgment. Both qualities are manifested in the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*, which is why King David desired this beard—to show mercy to those who deserved it and to wage war against the enemies of Israel. See *Zohar* 3:139b (*IR*).

198. **In this beard appear nine enhancements...** Or features. See above, notes 194–95. As explained in note 190, the phrase "offering of spices" refers to the cheeks.

In addition to six features of the beard (three on each side of the face), three other features appear in the splendid middle (and full body) of the beard. One of the latter is the hair growing from one side of the upper lip to the other, and beneath the lower lip from one side to the other. The other two features are the widening of the beard beneath the mouth and extending down to the belly, and the hair behind this visible hanging body of the beard. These latter three enhancements correspond to the second, sixth, and ninth enhancements described in *Idra Rabba*. See *Zohar* 3:139a (*IR*). The description of the first six enhancements as "three on one side and three on the other" does not entirely match the description of the remaining six enhancements in *Idra Rabba*. See ibid.

199. **All these six…** The first six enhancements (or features) of the beard flow into the hanging body of the beard, which extends down to the belly. The three other enhancements (described in the preceding note) constitute the splendid middle (and full body) of the beard; so they are fittingly associated with three divine names in the passage from Psalms: *From confinement I called to Yah. Yah answered me with expanse. YHVH is with me, I do not fear*. The phrase *from confinement* alludes to the hair around the lips, which is a confined space. The phrase *with expanse* alludes to the widening of the beard below the face.

Rabbi Shim'on acknowledges that in *Idra Rabba*, the phrase *from confinement* alludes to a different enhancement—the first one—in which the beard emerges from a narrow (or constricted) place in front of the ears. This interpretation, too, "is fine."

See above, note 195; *Zohar* 3:139b (*IR*). On *Idra Rabba*, see above, note 1.

200. **in the Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava…** According to this venerable source, the first enhancement of the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* corresponds to (or originates from) the first of the seven lower *sefirot*: *Ḥesed*, which is also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness). This divine quality (and *sefirah*) is the first one mentioned in the verse from Chronicles: *Yours, O YHVH, are* הגדולה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד (*ha-gedullah ve-ha-gevurah ve-ha-tif'eret ve-ha-netsaḥ ve-ha-hod*), *the greatness and the power and the beauty and the victory and the splendor —yes, all that is in heaven and on earth*.

Quoted often in kabbalistic literature, this biblical list of divine qualities is understood as designating *Ḥesed* (or *Gedullah*), *Gevurah, Tif'eret, Netsaḥ, Hod, Yesod* (known as *all*), and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *earth*), who is joined with *Tif'eret* (*heaven*). All of these "belong" to *YHVH*, which here refers to *Binah* (or the triad of *Keter, Ḥokhmah*, and *Binah*).

Rabbi Shim'on acknowledges that "it is all," i.e., the deep significance of the beard includes this interpretation

of Rav Yeiva Sava's too. Yet there are nine enhancements—not just seven, as could be implied by the verse in Chronicles. And although these begin "in front of the ears," they endure only "in another place," apparently referring to the central body of the beard.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital (in *Hadrat Melekh*); *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Bei'urei ha-Gera*; *Yafah Sha'ah*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam; Sha'arei ha-Idra*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The Book of *Aggadta* of Rav Yeiva Sava is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. On this library, see above, p. 165, n. 38. On this particular book, see above at note 48. On the verse in Chronicles, see *Zohar* 1:235b, 241a–b; 2:40b, 178b (*SdTs*); 3:24a, 89b, 92a, 137b (*IR*), 148a.

201. **When the world needs Compassion...** When the people of Israel are in distress, the flowing beard (*mazzala*) of the Holy Ancient One is revealed, and all the enhancements (or features) of the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One) become compassionate toward them, defeating their enemies. On the term *mazzala*, see above, note 50.

202. **All these hairs of the beard...** The rough texture of these hairs enables them to subdue harsh forces of Judgment. See *Zohar* 3:140a (*IR*).

The concluding sentence apparently alludes to God plucking out the enemies of Israel. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 95b–96a (quoting Isaiah 7:20). According to *Or Yaqar*, however, this sentence is based on the notion that hair often signifies harsh Judgment, and so the plucking of hairs signifies the assuagement of Judgment. See *Zohar* 3:48b–49a, discussing the removal of the hair of *Ze'eir Anpin*, based on Leviticus 13:40: *If* [or: *When*] *a man's hair falls out* [literally: *is plucked out*], *he is bald; he is pure*. See Vital (in *Hadrat Melekh*); cf. *Zohar* 1:217a.

On hair as signifying harsh powers, see also *Zohar* 1:223b, 241b; 3:60b, 70a, 79a, 125b–126a, 127b, 131b–

132a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*), 151b; *ZḤ* 31b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 119–26.

The phrase "victorious in battle" derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 15:3, rendering [*YHVH is*] *a man of war*. On the image of the dark-haired divine warrior, see BT *Ḥagigah* 14a, quoted above, note 142.

203. **These nine enhancements were recited by Moses…** The first time that Moses uttered the divine attributes (corresponding to the divine enhancements) was after the Israelites sinned by worshiping the Golden Calf, as Judgment loomed, threatening to destroy the whole people. Moses saved them by invoking the thirteen attributes of Compassion, as recorded in Exodus 34:6–7: *And YHVH passed before him—and he* [namely Moses] *proclaimed: YHVH! YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*], *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*] *and truth* [or: *faithfulness*], *keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, removing iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations*. By invoking these thirteen attributes, Moses drew down the corresponding thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient One to *Ze'eir Anpin* (the Short-tempered One), who at that time was dominated by Judgment.

Later, as the people neared the land of Canaan, Moses sent twelve tribal representatives to scout out the land, and when they returned to the camp, ten of them offered a negative report, insisting that the land could not be conquered. Disheartened, the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron, and then God threatened to destroy the whole people. At this critical moment ("a second time"), Moses again invoked the divine attributes, though in a shorter list: *YHVH! Slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*], *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*], *removing iniquity and transgression; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the*

guilt of fathers upon sons, to the third and fourth generations (Numbers 14:18).

Here this shorter list is understood to include nine attributes. By reciting them, Moses intended to transform the nine enhancements of the beard of *Ze'eir Anpin* from the quality of Judgment into the quality of Compassion. Before beginning his recitation, Moses invoked the flowing beard (*mazzala*) of the Holy Ancient One by saying *Now, please, let the power of YHVH be great* (Numbers 14:17). The phrase *the power of YHVH* refers to the *mazzala*.

On the universal influence of *mazzala*, see *Targum*, Ecclesiastes 9:2: "All depends upon *mazzala*, destiny [or: fortune; astrological influence]." Cf. BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a, in the name of Rava: "Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but on *mazzala*, destiny." See above, note 50.

On the thirteen attributes in Exodus and the thirteen enhancements of the Holy Ancient One, see above, note 26. On the notion that the thirteen attributes were uttered by Moses rather than by God, see Vol. 8, p. 353, n. 111. On the two sets of attributes, see *Zohar* 3:140a–b (*IR*), 146b–147a, 161b.

The context in Numbers (14:17–19) reads: *Now, please, let the power of my Lord be great, as You have spoken, saying, "YHVH! Slow to anger* [or: *long-suffering*] *and abounding in kindness* [or: *love*], *removing iniquity and transgression; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons, to the third and fourth generations." Forgive, please, the iniquity of this people through Your great kindness, and as You have borne with this people from Egypt until now*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on changes *the power of my Lord* to *the power of YHVH*.

204. ***Like fine oil on the head…*** The oil symbolizes the flow proceeding from the Holy Ancient One to the head and beard of *Ze'eir Anpin*.

The context in Psalms (133:2–3) reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of*

Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes. Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion; for there YHVH ordained the blessing, life forevermore. See above, p. 468, n. 561.

205. **These hairs do not cover the lips…** So that the mouth of *Ze'eir Anpin* can breathe and speak freely. The color red signifies Judgment, which is decreed by this mouth against those who deserve punishment. Yet the forces of Judgment also include an element of Compassion.

On the lips' being free of hair, see *Zohar* 3:141a (*IR*). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His lips are lilies* [understood here as *roses*], *dripping liquid myrrh*. See BT *Shabbat* 30b: *"His lips are* שושנים (*shoshanim*), *lilies*…. Do not read *shoshanim* but rather ששונים (*she-shonim*), *that study*." Cf. BT *Shabbat* 88b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:13. On *shoshanim* as *roses*, see above, p. 576, n. 227. On this verse, cf. *Zohar* 3:140b (*IR*).

The verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH has turned away from you and become your foe*. Daniel 4:10 reads in full: *I was gazing in the visions of my mind, and look*, עיר וקדיש (*ir ve-qaddish*), *a holy watcher* [literally: *a watcher* (or *emissary*) *and a holy one*], *coming down from heaven*.

206. **In the breath issuing from the mouth…** Numerous angelic forces are enveloped and sustained by the divine breath; prophets are inspired and "clothed" by it. See *Zohar* 3:141a (*IR*).

On prophets being "clothed" by the divine breath (or spirit), see Judges 6:34: *The spirit* [or: *breath*] *of YHVH clothed Gideon*. Cf. 1 Chronicles 12:19; 2 Chronicles 24:20; Vol. 8, p. 374, n. 196.

207. **When words issue from the mouth…** The words issuing from the mouth of *Ze'eir Anpin* stimulate eighteen thousand worlds. This number of worlds derives from a passage in BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Abba: "What does [God] do at night?… He rides his light cherub and sails through eighteen thousand worlds."

The “twelve known ways” may correspond to twelve potencies of *Tif’eret* (the core of *Ze’eir Anpin*), which are often associated with twelve גבולי אלכסון (*gevulei alakhson*), “diagonal borders” (edges of a cube), mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 5:1. See above, p. 355, n. 197. The phrase “a tongue speaking grandly” derives from Daniel’s dream-vision (Daniel 7:8, 20), which describes *a mouth speaking grandly* [or: *arrogantly*]. Cf. *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*).

The first quotation from Song of Songs—*His palate is sweets*—implies that the forces of Judgment are sweetened. The quotation from Job refers to the palate’s ability to distinguish between sweet and bitter. See above at (and following) note 182.

The word מחמדים (*maḥamaddim*), *desirable*, alludes to “fire and water,” since *maḥamaddim* includes both חם (*ḥam*), “hot,” and מים (*mayim*), “water.” This demonstrates that *Ze’eir Anpin* harmonizes *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, symbolized respectively by water and fire, and by the colors white and red.

The full verse in Song of Songs 5 reads: *His palate is sweets, and all of him desirable. This is my lover and this is my companion, O daughters of Jerusalem*.

208. ***His palate*—with inscribed letters...** Rabbi Shim’on begins to discuss four letters—א (*alef*), ח (*ḥet*), ה (*he*), ע (*ayin*)—which are technically guttural letters, not palatals. Following these, he refers to the actual palatal letters: ג (*gimel*), י (*yod*), כ (*kaf*), ק (*qof*).

The letter א (*alef*), whose numerical value is one, alludes to the unified realm of the Holy Ancient One. Apparently, the reference to “driving out kings” and the quotation from Daniel allude to the theme of *the kings who reigned in the land of Edom* (representing primordial worlds that were destroyed). See above, note 120; *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*.

On the guttural and palatal letters, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:3; *Zohar* 1:80a (*ST*); and 2:123a (where the four guttural letters are similarly presented as palatals).

The verse in Daniel reads in full: *He changes the times and the seasons, removing kings and establishing kings; He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to the discerning*.

209. ח **(*Ḥet*)...** Alluding to חכמה (*Ḥokhmah*), who casts down and raises up.

Cf. *Zohar* 2:123a. For various interpretations of this and the following two letters, see *Or Yaqar*; *Omer Man*; *Emet le-Ya'aqov*; *Yayin ha-Reqaḥ*; *Sullam*; *Sha'arei ha-Idra; Matoq mi-Devash*.

210. ה **(*He*)—Mother suckling...** This letter, often a feminine marker, alludes to the Divine Mother, *Binah*, who nourishes Her offspring, the lower *sefirot*. She emanates to *Shekhinah*, "the Great Female," who is also symbolized by "the Holy City" of Jerusalem.

The concluding sentence apparently refers to the union of the Divine Male with *Shekhinah*. The former is characterized by *Ḥesed* (Love) and the color white, associated with *frankincense*, which is whitish. The latter is characterized by *Din* (Judgment) and the color red, associated with *myrrh*, which is a reddish resin. See *Zohar* 2:123a.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Before the day blows softly in and the shadows flee* [i.e., before the break of dawn], *I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense*.

211. ע **(*Ayin*)...** The numerical value of this letter is seventy, apparently alluding here to seventy branches of the sefirotic Tree of Life ("rafters of branches"). The "engraved spirits" may allude to the seventy members of Jacob's household who entered Egypt (according to Genesis 46:27). Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret* (the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*). See *Zohar* 2:123a.

The image of "a glowing ember engraved on the lip" recalls the midrashic account of the baby Moses who burned his tongue with a glowing ember. See *Shemot Rabbah* 1:26. Moses also symbolizes *Tif'eret*. The phrase "a

glowing ember" renders טיפסא (*tifsa*), which sometimes bears this meaning in the *Zohar*. See *Zohar* 1:218a, 242a; 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:111a, 114b; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 178–80; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David* , s.v. *tifsa*.

212. **in the Mysteries of Letters of King Solomon...** According to this venerable source, the four guttural letters—א (*alef*), ח (*ḥet*), ה (*he*), ע (*ayin*)—"are crowned with" the four palatal letters: ג (*gimel*), י (*yod*), כ (*kaf*), ק (*qof*). The latter set of four letters flavors and sweetens the former set.

The verse in Job demonstrates the need for flavor. The first verse quoted from Psalm 19 (praising the commandments of Torah) mentions sweetness (*sweeter than honey*). The second verse—*Your servant, too, is careful with them*, etc.—now refers to how one must be careful in contemplating (or combining) the guttural and palatal letters, by which the divine throat and mouth are unified.

In the verse from Isaiah, צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *righteousness*, may allude to a condition in which the harsh quality of *Shekhinah*—known as צדק (*tsedeq*), "righteousness"—is assuaged by *Tif'eret*; thereby the letter ה (*he*) is added to Her name צדק (*tsedeq*), turning it into צדקה (*tsedaqah*). See above, note 112.

On the guttural and palatal letters, see above, note 208. The Mysteries of Letters of King Solomon is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, p. 165, n. 38. On the numerous scientific and magical books attributed to King Solomon, see Vol. 8, p. 170, n. 328.

213. **I testify that all my days...** Rabbi Shim'on was careful in contemplating (or combining) these two sets of letters. But one day when he was meditating (and thereby adorning the Divine King), he made a certain mistake. Immediately, a flame blazed across the whole vicinity, signifying harsh Judgment. Rabbi Shim'on then realized how important it is to sweeten the guttural letters with the palatal letters. Thereby one can *taste and see that YHVH is*

good and partake of the divine *bread* and *wine*. On the phrase “the sweets of the King,” see *Zohar* 2:123a.

Meron is located about six miles west of Safed in Galilee. It is traditionally identified as the burial place of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, as indicated below at note 236. On Rabbi Shim’on’s residing in Meron, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pequdei* 7. According to rabbinic accounts, Rabbi Shim’on together with his son, Rabbi El’azar, hid from the Roman authorities in a cave for thirteen years. See above, p. 316, n. 59.

214. **The Male extends by *Da’at*...** The body of *Ze’eir Anpin* extends from the head downward through the power of *Da’at*. The image of filling “porticos and chambers” is based on Proverbs 24:4: ובדעת (*Uv-da’at*), *And by knowledge, rooms are filled*. See above, notes 62, 95.

215. **To His back cleaves a spark...** To the back of *Ze’eir Anpin* cleaves a spark issuing from the primordial divine potency, called בוצינא דקרדינותא (*botsina de-qardinuta*), the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness. This flashing impulse generates the skull of the Female, which contains “two brains,” corresponding to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. The Female cleaves to the side (or back) of the Male, the two of them forming a single androgynous body, or Siamese twins.

The androgynous nature of this divine body (or Primordial Adam) prefigures the androgynous nature of the original human being. See *Midrash Tehillim* 139:5: “*Behind and in front You formed me* (Psalms 139:5). What is *behind and in front?* They were created [as a single creature] with two faces. So it was with Adam: behind him was the form of Eve—as is said: *YHVH Elohim built the side* [*He had taken from the human into a woman*] (Genesis 2:22).”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1: “Rabbi Yirmeyah son of El’azar said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 5:2).’ Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam,

He created him דו פרצופין (*du partsufin*), with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’”

On the androgynous nature of the original human being, see Vol. 8, pp. 18–19, n. 54. On the verse in Psalms and Genesis 2:22, see ibid.

The description of the female skull as “sealed on all sides” apparently reflects the medieval anatomical notion that, unlike the male skull, the female skull consists of a single circular bone. See *Or Yaqar*; *Mattenot Kehunnah, Bereshit Rabbah* 89:8; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim* 9, 26a.

On the configuration of the Female in *Idra Zuta*, see Asulin, “Qomatah shel ha-Shekhinah.” On the passage here, see *Zohar* 3:141b (*IR*). On the term *botsina de-qardinuta*, “Lamp of Adamantine Darkness,” see above, note 129.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake. Hark! My lover is urging:* [or: *Hark! My lover knocks; The voice of my lover, urging; The voice of my lover, knocking*;] *“Open for me, my sister, my beloved, my dove*, תמתי (*tammati*), *my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, my locks with droplets of the night.”* On interpreting תמתי (*tammati*), *my perfect one*, as תאומתי (*te’omati*), *my twin*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 70b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 18 (all in the name of Rabbi Yannai); *Shemot Rabbah* 2:4.

216. **In the hair of the Female…** The color purple includes a range of hues between red and blue. On the inclusive quality of purple, see *Zohar* 1:147b (*ST*); 2:135a (Vol. 5, p. 249, n. 167); 3:141b (*IR*).

On this paragraph, see *Zohar* 3:141b (*IR*). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your head upon you like Mount Carmel, and the dangling locks of your head like royal purple; a king is captured* [or: *bound*] *by the flowing tresses*. See above, pp. 723–24, n. 204.

217. ***Gevurah* is linked with five *Gevuran*, Powers...** These five aspects emerging from *Gevurah* enable the Female configuration to expand.

Whereas originally the Female and Male were joined back-to-back, they are now separated so that they can rejoin face-to-face. See the passage from *Bereshit Rabbah*, quoted above, note 215; *Zohar* 3:142b–143a (*IR*); *ZḤ* 62c (*ShS*), 72b (*ShS*). Cf. above, note 127.

On the five *Gevuran*, see *Zohar* 3:137b–138b, 141a, 142a (all *IR*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:83a; 3:24a, 31b, 38a, 48b, 60a.

218. **A male alone appears as half a body...** And similarly, a female. The former is characterized by Compassion, the latter by Judgment.

For the phrase "half a body," see *Zohar* 3:7b, 57b, 109b (*RM*); *ZḤ* 43d, 59a (*MhN*). See Liebes, *Peraqim*, 277–79.

219. ***Therefore YHVH blessed the Sabbath day...*** The Sabbath is a celebration of the union of the Divine King (*Ze'eir Anpin*) and *Matronita* (*Shekhinah*).

The full verse in Exodus reads: *For in six days YHVH made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in it, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore YHVH blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*.

220. **one who is not male and female...** That is, unmarried. Such a person is incomplete and remains unblessed.

See BT *Yevamot* 62b–63a: "Rabbi Tanḥum said in the name of Rabbi Ḥanilai, 'Any man who has no wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness.'... Rabbi El'azar said, 'Any אדם (*adam*), man, who has no wife is not an *adam*, as is said: *Male and female He created them... and He named them adam* (Genesis 5:2).'"

See Genesis 1:26–27; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:9; *Midrash Tehillim* 59:2; *Zohar* 1:34b, 47a, 55b, 150a–b, 165a, 182a, 233a–b, 239a, 248a; 2:144b; 3:5a–b, 7a, 17a, 33b–34a, 46b, 74b, 81b, 141b (*IR*), 143b (*IR*), 145b, 148a; *ZḤ* 50c, 65b (*ShS*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the*

Zohar, 3:1355–79. On the androgynous nature of Adam, see above, note 215. On the phrase "half a body," see above, note 218.

221. **To this Female…** The lower worlds are linked to the configuration of the Female (*Shekhinah*). Just as *Binah* is mother to *Ze'eir Anpin* (that is, to the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*), who is pictured as the divine body, so is *Shekhinah* mother to all the lower worlds.

222. ***Say to Wisdom, 'You are my sister'…*** Here the verse is construed as addressed to *Ze'eir Anpin* (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*), whose *sister* (and intimate partner) is *Shekhinah*. The Father of both *Ze'eir Anpin* and *Shekhinah* is *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom). *Shekhinah* (the daughter of *Ḥokhmah*) is Female Wisdom, also known as Lower (or Small) Wisdom, in contrast to *Ḥokhmah*, who is Upper Wisdom. The clause *Say to Wisdom* means "Say to *Shekhinah*."

Since *Shekhinah* suffers exile along with Her people, She is diminished and pictured as *a little sister* with *no breasts*. Yet, from a higher perspective (or when Israel is redeemed), She is a formidable *wall*, Her breasts *like towers*. Rabbi Shim'on relates מגדלות (*migdalot*), *towers*, to its cognate adjective גדול (*gadol*), "big, great."

On the verse in Proverbs, see above, pp. 34–35, n. 93. On *Shekhinah* as Lower (or Small) Wisdom, see above, note 68.

Song of Songs 8:8 reads in full: *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What will we do for our sister on the day she is spoken for?* In its simple sense, the clause *she has no breasts* means that her breasts are not yet formed; *when she is spoken for* means "when a suitor proposes to her." On the midrashic and Zoharic interpretation of *a little sister*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 304; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:8; *Midrash Tehillim* 15:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:16; *Zohar* 2:80b; 3:78a. Cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11 (quoted above, pp. 680–81, n. 60).

Song of Songs 8:10 reads in full: *I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. So now I have become in his eyes like one who finds favor*.

223. **The Male extends…** *Ze'eir Anpin* emanates by means of the potency that He has received from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. *Tif'eret* (the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*) blends the colors of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* (white and red). The entire body of *Ze'eir Anpin* is pictured as a cosmic Tree.

The context in Daniel (4:8–9) describes the tree seen by King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream: *The tree grew and became mighty, and its top reached the heavens and its branches to the ends of all the earth. Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant; there was food for all in it. Beneath it the beasts of the field found shade, and in its branches dwelled the birds of heaven, and all flesh was nourished from it*. See above, note 90.

224. **His arms, right and left…** *Ze'eir Anpin*'s two arms are *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*. *Da'at* permeates all the chambers of His body.

On the wording "in the right, life…; in the left, death," see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §372; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4. On *Da'at* and on the verse in Proverbs, see above, notes 62, 214.

225. **Further the body extends…** Into *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, pictured as the two thighs, and associated as well with the two kidneys and the two testicles. The entire flow and energy of the Male are channeled to the divine phallus, representing *Yesod*. See *Zohar* 3:96b, 142a (*IR*).

Tif'eret is called *YHVH*, while *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* are called *Tseva'ot* (Armies, Hosts, Forces). Thus the compound name *YHVH Tseva'ot* refers to these three *sefirot*. See *Zohar* 3:11b; cf. above, p. 725, n. 207. On the passage beginning here and extending below to the end of Rabbi Shim'on's teaching (at note 231), see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 63–65.

226. **Phallus of the Male—consummation of the whole body…** As the sefirotic phallus, *Yesod* is the

consummation of the divine male body, uniting with and sweetening (or assuaging) the Female (*Shekhinah*), who is characterized by Judgment.

Zion and Jerusalem represent two features of the Female's genital organs. See below, note 230. The word "covering" renders כסותא (*kesuta*). This term may be a euphemism for "nakedness, genitals." Alternatively, it refers to the fact that the genitals normally remain concealed. Or, "covering" alludes to how the vagina covers and conceals the phallus. See *Zohar* 3:142a (*IR*); Vol. 8, p. 432, n. 396; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 243.

When the Female (known as *Matronita*) is separated from the back of *Ze'eir Anpin*, and then unites with Him face-to-face on Sabbath eve, the two of them form a single complete body. (See above, notes 215, 217, 219.) She represents the Divine Throne. See *Zohar* 2:135a–b.

"The Complete Name" apparently refers to *YHVH Elohim*, which is called so in midrashic literature. Here, *YHVH* would designate *Ze'eir Anpin*, and *Elohim* would designate the Female. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; 15:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 167a; *Midrash Yelammedenu, Liqqutim* 1, 7 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:141, 143). Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15.

On *Yesod* as "consummation of the whole body," see *Zohar* 1:149b, 153b–154a, 158a, 162b, 246b; 2:224a, 225a, 258b (*Heikh*), 259b (*Heikh*); 3:6a, 53b, 66b.

227. **All these words I have reserved...** Rabbi Shim'on had intended to save these secret and profound teachings until he entered Paradise. But he rejoices in having revealed them now while still in this world. See above, notes 9, 94.

228. **Just as the Male is composed of three...** The core of *Ze'eir Anpin* consists of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. His "beginning" consists of *Ḥokhmah, Binah*, and *Da'at*. The consummation of His body consists of *Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*.

The phrase "the site of the Holy of Holies below" may refer to the genital organs of the Female, in contrast to a

higher Holy of Holies, namely *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. (See below, note 230.) According to *Or Yaqar*, "the site of the Holy of Holies below" refers to the Temple in Jerusalem, from where the priestly ritual stimulated the divine union above. Cf. *Zohar* 2:145b.

The context in Psalms (133:2–3) reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes. Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion; for there YHVH ordained the blessing, life forevermore*. See above, note 204.

For various interpretations of this and the following three paragraphs, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital (in *Hadrat Melekh*); *Omer Man; Emet le-Ya'aqov; Yafah Sha'ah; Yayin ha-Reqaḥ; Sullam; Sha'arei ha-Idra; Matoq mi-Devash*.

229. **no one is permitted to enter there…** In the earthly Temple in Jerusalem, only the high priest is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year on Yom Kippur. He is associated with *Ḥesed*. Similarly, in the divine realm, only *Yesod* (who conveys the flow from *Ḥesed* and is characterized by that quality) can enter the genital organs of the Female, known as the Holy of Holies. On the association of *Ḥesed* with *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 3:142a (*IR*); above, p. 508, n. 21.

230. **Zion and Jerusalem are two rungs…** Symbolizing two features of the Female's genital organs, perhaps the vagina and vulva. Zion refers to the Female's quality of Compassion; Jerusalem, to Her quality of Judgment.

Isaiah 1:27 associates Zion with משפט (*mishpat*), *justice*, which represents Compassion. Conversely, Isaiah 1:21 links Jerusalem with צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*, which signifies Judgment. See above, note 166.

On the sexual connotation of Zion, Jerusalem, and the Holy of Holies, see Liebes, "Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar," 194, n. 362; Abrams, *Ha-Guf ha-Elohi ha-Nashi ba-*

Qabbalah, 45–53; Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 134; Morris, "Nequddat Tsiyyon—'Sod Beit ha-Rehem'"; Har-Shefi, *Malkin Qadma'in*, 206–8.

231. **However, the desire of the Male...** Although the name Zion pertains to the Female, it also designates *Yesod*, who conveys the flow of blessing to Her, and through Her to all the lower worlds. "This place (of the Female) is called Holy, and all the Holies of the Male enter there," turning the "Holy" into the Holy of Holies. The phrase "in that rung" apparently refers to Zion. According to *Emet le-Ya'aqov*, it means "by that rung," namely by means of *Yesod*.

The entire holy flow of the Male originates in His brains. This image reflects an ancient theory (attributed to Pythagoras and taught by Alcmaeon of Croton), according to which sperm derives from the brain. See Vol. 5, p. 469, n. 795.

The divine name *Tseva'ot* (Armies, Hosts, Forces) refers to *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, who are pictured as two testicles, from which the divine sperm is poured into *Yesod*. (See above, note 225.) The white color of the divine semen symbolizes *Ḥesed*, which is associated with *Yesod*. See above, note 229.

In the concluding quotation from Psalms, *there* refers to Zion. See the full verse, above, note 228.

232. **The Supernal Holy Lamp had not finished...** As Rabbi Shim'on was completing the verse in Psalms—with the words *life forevermore*—his voice subsided. This was perfectly fitting, since Rabbi Shim'on's *life* was now ending.

As indicated near the beginning of this narrative (above at note 10), Rabbi Abba was transcribing all of Rabbi Shim'on's words. The two biblical verses uttered by the "voices" refer to the eternal life awaiting Rabbi Shim'on in the world that is coming.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp," see above, p. 27, n. 68.

233. **Holy of Holies...** Cf. the appearance of this term above at notes 228–29, 231. On Rabbi Shim'on's smiling

face, see BT *Ketubbot* 103b: “If one dies smiling, it is a good omen for him.” Cf. *Zohar* 1:245b.

234. **Three there were…** This may mean that there had been a triad of holy men—Rabbi Shim’on, Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir, and Rabbi El’azar—but now only one (Rabbi El’azar) remains in the world.

The concluding sentence describes the chaos caused by Rabbi Shim’on’s death. Earlier (above at note 223) Rabbi Shim’on had quoted (with a slight change) the description of the cosmic Tree in Daniel 4:9: *Beneath it the beasts of the field find shade, and in its branches dwell the birds of heaven, and there is food for all in it*. Two verses later (ibid., 11), a voice declares: *Cut down the tree, hack off its branches…. Let the beasts flee from underneath it and the birds from its branches*. (Cf. Jeremiah 9:9.) Here, Rabbi Shim’on can be pictured as the cosmic Tree, which has been cut down. As a result, “חיותא (*ḥeivata*), the beasts, will flee; birds are flying away.” The word *ḥeivata* may refer here to the angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings) who carry the Divine Throne, while “birds” may represent other angels. The “Great Sea” often symbolizes *Shekhinah*. See *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:164; Scholem.

The final clause is startling and not readily explained. Instead of being nourished by Rabbi Shim’on, and now overwhelmed by misery and grief, the Companions, as it were, “are all drinking blood.” Tishby considers emending שתיין (*shateyan*), “drinking,” to שתתן (*shatetan*), “dripping.” Cf. *Zohar* 1:99a (*MhN*). However, all of the manuscripts preserve the reading *shateyan*.

Perhaps the image of “drinking blood” derives from the apocalyptic vision in Ezekiel 39:17–19, where the birds and beasts are invited to *eat flesh and drink blood*. Or, conceivably, the author is combining two tropes of medieval Hebrew (and Arabic) poetry: tears of blood and mixing tears into wine. In one of his poems of complaint, Solomon Ibn Gabirol writes (*Shirei ha-Ḥol*, p. 68, poem 120): “I

mingle בדמי דמעי (*be-dami dema'ai*), my tears with my blood; I mingle my tears into my wine." The Zoharic author may be mingling both of Ibn Gabirol's images, describing how the Companions imbibe their own bloody tears. Cf. Psalms 80:6: *You made them drink a third of a measure of tears*. See also ibid. 102:10: *My drink I have mingled with tears*. Cf. as well the biblical metaphor for wine: *blood of grapes* (Genesis 49:11); *the blood of the grape* (Deuteronomy 32:14).

Alternatively, the author may be alluding to the Christian doctrine of transubstantiation, which was defined at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. According to this teaching, the bread and wine used in the sacrament of the Eucharist become the actual body and blood of Christ. Here, Rabbi Shim'on would be sustaining the Companions even after his physical death. (See Matthew 26:27–28 [and parallels]; Liebes, "Mar'ish ha-Arets," 357, n. 156.) Admittedly, in Rabbi El'azar's concluding sentence, "drinking blood" seems to be the final awful element, not something hopeful and sustaining; but perhaps its terrible and shocking quality is precisely its Christological nature.

On the association of Rabbi Shim'on with Jesus, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 155; 239–40, nn. 67–68. On Rabbi Shim'on as "the son of God," see *Zohar* 3:61b (Vol. 7, p. 404, n. 140). On his divine status, see also above, p. 426, n. 425. On his Messianic status, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1–84.

This possible allusion to Christian doctrine stimulates a reconsideration of Rabbi El'azar's preceding sentence: "Three there were; into one they have turned." His remark may allude to the Trinity. Conceivably, the triad of Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi El'azar, and Rabbi Pinḥas corresponds to the three persons of the Trinity—since Rabbi Shim'on and Rabbi El'azar are "father" and "son," and Rabbi Pinḥas is elsewhere associated with "the Holy Spirit." (See above, p. 439 and n. 469.) On three becoming one, cf. *Zohar* 1:32b, 77a; 2:43b, 95a, 133b, 160b; 3:162a (above, p. 57 at nn.

11–12). Cf. 2:14b (*MhN*). On likely traces of trinitarian influence in the *Zohar*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:973; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140–45.

On Rabbi Pinḥas, see above, note 3. On the triad of Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi Pinḥas, and Rabbi El'azar, see *Zohar* 3:203a (above, p. 440 at n. 472); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:164. Cf. *ZḤ* 18d–19a (*MhN*).

235. **a litter made of a ladder…** Rendering the neologistic phrase טיקרא דסיקלא (*tiqra de-siqla*). The word *tiqra* may be based on תקרה (*tiqrah*), "ceiling, joist, beam," apparently referring here to a stretcher or litter. *Siqla* derives from Greek and Latin *scala*, "stairs, gangway (of a ship), ladder." See *Tosefta Shabbat* 13:14; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 3:219.

The phrase *tiqra de-siqla* may also allude to the Sufi expression *ṭariq al-salik*, "the way of the wayfarer" (or "the path of the pilgrim"), referring to the spiritual path. Abraham Abulafia (a contemporary of the Zoharic authors) was likely influenced by the Sufi term (and concept) *ṭariqah*. See Idel, *Peraqim be-Qabbalah Nevu'it*, 122, n. 45.

The rhetorical question—"Who has seen the confusion of the Companions?"—refers obviously to the Companions' state of mind in the aftermath of Rabbi Shim'on's death; but it may also allude to the author's deliberately confusing vocabulary and chaotic creativity. In the following lines, several words are nearly anagrams of either *tiqra* or *siqla*. For example, "exuded" renders הוה סלקא (*havah saleqa*); "they lifted" renders סליקו (*seliqu*). See the end of the following note.

The question "Who has seen the confusion?" appears in a positive sense in *ZḤ* 90d (*MhN*, *Rut*), where it parallels "Who has seen the joy?"

236. **Truculent stingers…** Formidable Torah scholars came from nearby cities, seeking to have Rabbi Shim'on buried near them. But the loyal inhabitants of Meron,

fearing that the great sage would not be buried in their own town, scared them off.

Sepphoris was an ancient city in Galilee; not long after Rabbi Shim'on's death, it became renowned as the seat of the Sanhedrin and the home of mighty scholars. Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, was home to some of the leading *tanna'im*, and it later served as the center of Palestinian Jewry's political and religious leadership until the Arab conquest in the seventh century. Around 400, the Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud was edited there. Maimonides was buried there in 1206.

On Meron as the burial place of Rabbi Shim'on, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:23; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:2. (Elements of that midrashic narrative are imitated here.) Cf. above, note 213; *Zohar* 3:71a (Vol. 7, p. 474, n. 372).

On "shield-bearing warriors" of Torah, see BT *Berakhot* 27b, *Bekhorot* 36a. On such "shield-bearing warriors" from Sepphoris, see *Zohar* 2:38b. On the martial metaphor applied to Torah scholars, see above, p. 265, n. 61.

"Truculent stingers" renders טריקין (*teriqin*), deriving from the root טרק (*trq*), "to sting, bite." "Banding together" renders בקטירין (*bi-qtirin*), "in bands."

237. **After his bier emerged...** A voice announces the הלולא (*hillula*) of Rabbi Shim'on. This term means "festivity," especially "wedding feast; wedding celebration." Rabbi Shim'on's death is, in fact, a celebration of his union with *Shekhinah*.

See above, note 99. By the sixteenth century, it was customary to visit the grave of Rabbi Shim'on in Meron on *Lag ba-Omer*. This was a ritual of celebration, not mourning, and became known as *Hillula de-Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai*. See Yaari, "Toledot ha-Hillula be-Meiron"; Huss, "Maqom Qadosh, Zeman Qadosh, Sefer Qadosh."

On the image of the bier rising in the air, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:22; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 27:1; *Shir ha-Shirim*

Rabbah on 8:7; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:13; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:7.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *He shall enter into peace; they shall rest upon their couches—he who walks uprightly.* On the proclamation of this verse, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:5; *Sifrei Zuta* 6:26; JT *Sotah* 1:9, 17c; BT *Shabbat* 152b, *Ketubbot* 104a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 25; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34; *Devarim Rabbah* 11:10; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:3; 116:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:7.

238. **As he entered the cave…** His burial site in Meron.

The first sentence uttered by the voice is a paraphrase of Isaiah 14:16: *Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?* There the words are spoken derisively by those witnessing the miserable fate of the king of Babylon (or Assyria). Here, the mockery is transformed into praise for Rabbi Shim'on. See *Zohar* 2:14b (*MhN*); above, p. 766 at n. 37; Liebes, "Mar'ish ha-Arets," 345–57.

The phrase "open mouths of accusation" renders פטרין (*pitrin*), "openings," an abbreviation of פטרין דפומא (*pitrin de-phuma*), "openings of the mouth," which is modeled on Hebrew פתחון פה (*pitḥon peh*), "opening of the mouth; pretext," hence, opportunity for fault-finding by demonic forces above. See *Zohar* 1:89a (*ST*); 2:14b (*MhN*), 262a (*Heikh*).

1. **At first, He called them ‘a holy nation’…** The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God. You has YHVH chosen to be a treasured people to Him among all the peoples on the face of the earth*. Cf. Deuteronomy 14:2.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Holy* [literally: *Holiness*] *is Israel to YHVH, the firstfruits of His harvest. All who eat of it* [or: *who devour him*] *will be held guilty; evil will befall them—declares YHVH*. See *Zohar* 3:94a.

On the distinction between *holy* and *holiness*, see *Zohar* 2:121a–b. On God’s calling Israel by progressive terms, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11 (quoted above, pp. 680–81, n. 60). There the sequence is: “My daughter, My sister, My mother.”

2. ***Holiness* is highest of all…** Alluding to *Ḥokhmah*. The phrase “all sanctities” refers to the threefold formula “Holy, holy, holy” and its sefirotic correlation. See the following paragraph in the text.

3. **‘Holy, holy, holy’ turn into *holiness*…** This threefold formula (deriving from Isaiah 6:3 and recited in the *Qedushah* prayer) signifies the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, who unite and ascend to *Ḥokhmah*, thereby turning into *holiness*.

The “three rungs” of the people Israel are their three divisions: priests, Levites, and Israel. When all of these join together, they become linked to *Ḥokhmah* and are called *holiness to YHVH*.

The phrase in Jeremiah—ראשית תבואתה (*reshit tevu’atoh*), *the firstfruits of His harvest*—alludes to both *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. *Reshit* (first, beginning) refers to the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*. *Tevu’atoh* (*His harvest*) is spelled unusually, ending with the archaic masculine pronominal suffix ה (*he*), instead of ו (*vav*); the *he*—often a feminine marker—alludes to the Divine Mother, *Binah*.

The full verse in Isaiah, recording the prophet’s vision of the angels, reads: *One called to another, saying, “Holy,*

holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” On the significance of the threefold formula *Holy, holy, holy*, see Vol. 5, p. 144, n. 15.

On the holy unification of Israel’s three divisions, see *Zohar* 2:229b. On Israel’s being *holy* [or: *holiness*] *to YHVH*, see also Ezra 8:28.

On the spelling of תבואתה (*tevu’atoh*), see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 10; *Zohar* 1:226b; 2:121b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 89.

4. ***If a man eats of holiness inadvertently…*** Rabbi Abba links the verse in Jeremiah to two verses in Leviticus that mention *holiness*, namely the sacred donation offered to the priest. Leviticus 22:10 reads: *No outsider* [i.e., one who is neither a servant or a family member of a priest] *shall eat a sacred donation* [literally: *holiness*]. Leviticus 22:14 reads in full: *If a man eats the sacred donation* [literally: *holiness*] *inadvertently, he shall add a fifth of its value to it and give the sacred donation to the priest*.

Rabbi Abba interprets the first verse to mean that *no outsider* [i.e., no foreign nation] *shall eat of holiness* [i.e., shall harm Israel]. The second verse (in conjunction with the verse in Jeremiah) implies that even if another nation harms Israel *inadvertently*, it *will be held guilty*. See *Zohar* 2:121b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 89, 312. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 81:1.

5. **Beginning and end of all…** Both the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah* and the last *sefirah* (*Shekhinah*) share the quality of *holiness. Shekhinah* is known as Wisdom of Solomon and is symbolized by the moon.

When *Shekhinah* receives the full flow of emanation originating in *Ḥokhmah* via *Yesod*, She is called *holiness*. When She is not illumined completely, She is still called רוח הקדש (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), “the Holy Spirit,” or “Spirit of Holiness”—though not *holiness*, like *Ḥokhmah* above.

On *Shekhinah* as the Wisdom of Solomon, see above, p. 35, n. 94. The full verse in Kings reads: ותרב חכמת שלמה (*Va-terev*

ḥokhmat Shelomoh), *The wisdom of Solomon surpassed, the wisdom of all the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt*. Here, Rabbi El'azar construes the beginning of the verse as *The wisdom of Solomon increased*. On this verse, see *Zohar* 1:150a, 223a–b, 238a, 248b; 3:74b; *ZḤ* 83b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 24.

Cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full." See above, p. 207, n. 61.

6. **suckles all those below…** All the lower worlds. Then *Shekhinah* is known as Mother, like Mother *Binah* above. She is also pictured as the Bride, who emerges from *Ḥokhmah* (known as *Lebanon*).

Rabbi El'azar associates לבנון (*levanon*), *Lebanon*, with לבן (*lavan*), "white," representing the quality of *Ḥesed*, which originates in *Ḥokhmah*. The latter is often known as Eden, based on Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden*. See above, p. 201, n. 45.

On being called Mother, cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11 (quoted above, pp. 680–81, n. 60). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *With me from Lebanon, bride; with me from Lebanon come! Descend from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the leopards' mountains*. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:3a, 5b (*MhN*); 3:72a.

For various interpretations of the sentence "And we call Her Holies…," see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

7. ***For the name of YHVH do I call…*** The context (Deuteronomy 32:3–4) reads: *For the name of YHVH do I call. Hail greatness for our God. The Rock, His acts are perfect, for all His ways are justice. A steadfast God without wrong, righteous and upright is He*.

8. ***Hail greatness* לאלהינו (*le-loheinu*), *for our God*** Alluding to *Binah*, who is often called *Elohim*.

9. ***Hail* גודל (*godel*), *greatness*...** Rabbi Abba shows how the verse alludes to all seven lower *sefirot*, which emanate from *Binah*. The word *godel*, *greatness*, represents *Ḥesed*, also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness). *The Rock* represents *Gevurah* (Power). The term משפט (*mishpat*), *justice*, often designates *Tif'eret*. The divine name *El* refers to *Netsaḥ*, branching from *Ḥesed*, who is associated with *El*. The phrase *without wrong* alludes to *Hod*, branching from *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment); this phrase implies that although Divine Judgment may be harsh, it is *without wrong*. As for *Righteous* (or Righteous One), this is a frequent name of *Yesod*. Finally, *upright* refers to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Tsedeq* (Righteousness). Thus the entire sefirotic span (from *Binah* to *Shekhinah*), pictured as the Divine Name, is included in this verse. Cf. above, p. 748, n. 49.

10. ***The name of YHVH*, really!...** The very letters of this Name symbolize all of the *sefirot*. See above, p. 74, n. 60.

As Moses was about to die (at the ripe age of *a hundred and twenty years*), he revealed to Israel the wisdom concealed in the verses of *this song* (Deuteronomy 32:1–43).

Rabbi Yose's statement—that "a virtuous person who possesses supernal wisdom... should reveal that wisdom" when he is about to depart from the world—likely alludes to the *Idra Zuta* (above, pp. 767–849), in which Rabbi Shim'on reveals the deepest secrets as he prepares to die.

Deuteronomy 31:2 reads in full: *He said to them, "A hundred and twenty years old I am today. I can no longer go forth and come in, and YHVH has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.'"* (The idiom *go forth and come in* means here to lead forces in battle.) Rabbi Yose may be construing the word *today* as implying that on that very day, Moses turned *a hundred and twenty years old*—the age at which he was to die. See above, p. 766, n. 33.

Deuteronomy 31:19 reads in full: *Now, write down this song and teach it to the Children of Israel; put it in their*

mouths, so that this song will be My witness against the Children of Israel. On the verse in Proverbs, see *Zohar* 1:96b; 2:98a.

11. **the end of the verse binds the knot of faith…** One should not imagine that the various *sefirot* (alluded to in Deuteronomy 32:3–4) are many and separate. Rather, they are all unified—and united with *Ein Sof* (or the Holy Ancient One). This single totality is referred to as *He*. Alternatively, *He* refers to *Ein Sof*, while the *sefirot* represent His Name.

See above, p. 772 at n. 19; p. 802, n. 104. On *He* as alluding to the Holy Ancient One (or *Keter*), see above, p. 788, n. 65.

12. **knows how to call fittingly…** With pure intention, and by focusing on the various *sefirot* and unifying them with *Ein Sof*.

The verse in Psalms reads: *Near is YHVH to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth*. See above, p. 226 at n. 117; *TZ* 63, 94b; *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*, 157b.

13. **What is meant by *in truth?*…** According to a rabbinic saying "The seal of the blessed Holy One is truth." Here, *truth* alludes to *Tif'eret* (the core of *Ze'eir Anpin*). In prayer, one can ascend the divine ladder by focusing on this sefirotic core.

The full verse in Micah reads: *You will grant truth to Jacob, love to Abraham, as You swore to our fathers from days of old*. Here, the beginning of the verse demonstrates the link between *truth* and *Tif'eret* (who is symbolized by *Jacob*).

For the rabbinic saying "The seal of the blessed Holy One is truth," see BT *Shabbat* 55a; above, p. 58, n. 12.

14. **one who enters and emerges…** The seeker who has entered the realm of mystery and emerged unscathed, who has plumbed the secrets and discovered how to apply them in his life. See above, pp. 791–92, n. 74.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My*

planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified.

15. **All these adornments…** The significance of the *sefirot* and their configurations, which "adorn" *Ein Sof* (or the Holy Ancient One).

The Reapers of the Field are those who harvest secrets of Torah, which can be pictured as sprouting in the field of *Shekhinah*. See above, p. 515, n. 41.

On the term תקונין (*tiqqunin*), "adornments, enhancements, arrays, configurations," see above, pp. 772–73, n. 20.

16. **The wicked… cause a defect above…** Their evil actions disrupt the union of the *sefirot*, thereby interrupting the flow of blessing to the lower worlds.

The verse in Deuteronomy 32 is notoriously difficult. Here, it apparently implies that the wicked of Israel have betrayed their Father, acting like *His non-children*; and their own moral *defect* has *ruined* the divine process.

The full verse reads literally: שחת לו לא בניו מומם (*Shiḥet lo lo banav mumam*), *He has dealt corruptly with Him, not His children, their blemish* [or: *defect*]—*a perverse and twisted generation*. One possible rendering of the first part of the verse is: *Ruined Him? No, His children's is the defect*. For a discussion (and other possible meanings), see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, ad loc. Cf. *Zohar* 2:26b.

On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai); *Zohar* 2:26b; 3:8a, 16b, 66a, 78a, 79a; *ZḤ* 78c (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. above, pp. 92–93, n. 115 (on weakening God).

17. ***He donned righteousness…*** When the people of Israel acted virtuously, God manifested צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *righteousness* (or *mercy, charity*); when they acted sinfully, God wreaked *vengeance* upon them.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *He donned* צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *victory* [or: *righteousness, justness*], *like a coat of armor, with a helmet of triumph on His head; He clothed Himself in garments of vengeance, wrapped Himself in zeal as in a robe*.

18. **What is the defect?…** That is, what defect do the wicked cause in the divine realm? They impede the flow of emanation from *Binah*, which no longer adequately nourishes the triad of *Ḥesed, Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Even less of the flow reaches Israel below, pictured as "the children." (Alternatively, "the children" represent *Netsaḥ, Hod*, and *Yesod*, the offspring of the higher sefirotic triad.) The paired homophones allude to the double defect: לוֹ לֹא (*lo lo*), *Him, non-*. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

19. **Whenever the wicked proliferate…** The verse from Psalms demonstrates that when *sinners vanish* and *the wicked* are *no more*, the Divine Name is blessed—*Bless, O my soul, YHVH!*

See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:4: "When the blessed Holy One exacts retribution from the wicked, His name is magnified in the world…. and Scripture states: *Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH, Hallelujah!* (Psalms 104:35)."

Cf. *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Rabbi El'azar: "When Israel fulfills the will of the Omnipresent, His name is magnified in the world…, and when Israel does not fulfill the will of the Omnipresent, His name is profaned in the world."

Cf. *Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ* 1, *Shirta* 3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:1 (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai); *Tanḥuma, Beshallaḥ* 7, *Tetsavveh* 10.

20. **This verse itself says so!…** There is no need to apply the verse in Psalms (*Let sinners vanish*…), since the verse in Deuteronomy itself indicates that *a perverse and twisted generation* causes ruin in the divine realm.

21. **after Moses said all these words…** Near the beginning of his song (Deuteronomy 32:3–4) Moses invoked the name *YHVH*, alluded to the various *sefirot*, and declared

righteous and upright is He. This implied that the *sefirot* were "perfectly arrayed." See above at notes 7–11.

22. **לו לא (*lo lo*), *Him? No…*** Rabbi Yehudah construes the verse differently: שחת לו לא בניו מומם (*Shiḥet lo lo banav mumam*), *Ruined Him? No, His children's is the defect*. In other words, the wicked cannot damage God or harm the divine process; rather, they hurt themselves and deprive the world below of blessings. See above, note 16; *Zohar* 2:26b.

23. **לו לא (*lo lo*), *Him, non-…*** Rabbi Abba disagrees with Rabbi Yehudah, insisting that these two homophones imply a double defect: in the divine realm above and on earth below. (See above, note 18.) The following verse supports this interpretation: *Is this how you repay YHVH?* In other words, "After all that God did for you, how dare you repay Him by causing a defect above?"

Deuteronomy 32:6 reads in full: *Is this how you repay YHVH, foolish and unwise people? Is He not your father, your creator, He who made you and set you firm?*

24. ***Yet even this, too…*** The full verse reads: *Yet even this, too—when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or loathe them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them, for I, YHVH, am their God*.

25. ***Yet even* זאת (*zot*), *this, too…*** The word זאת (*zot*), *this*, refers to *Shekhinah*, perhaps because as the Divine Presence She is always right here.

See *Zohar* 3:115b. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, p. 154, n. 7. On Her sharing in Israel's exile, see above, p. 393, n. 318.

26. **This may be compared to a king…** Similarly, when the Divine King punishes Israel by casting them into exile, Queen *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) insists on accompanying Her children and comforting them. When the King seeks Her, He seeks His children too; and He restores them along with Her.

Shekhinah is also known as *covenant* (a name that She shares with *Yesod*). The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך (*Ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha*), *YHVH your God will restore your fortunes* [or: *will return your captivity*], *and have compassion on you* [or: *and take you back in love*]. *He will return and gather you from all the nations where YHVH your God has scattered you*. Here, apparently, Rabbi Abba construes *YHVH your God will return your captivity* as meaning that King *Tif'eret* will restore *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as captive (sharing Israel's *captivity*). Cf. above, p. 731, n. 224; *Zohar* 3:115b.

For related parables, see *Bahir* 51 (76); *Zohar* 2:189a–b; 3:6a–b, 74a–b, 114b (Vol. 8, p. 240, n. 48); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 122–23.

The full verse in Exodus 2 reads: *YHVH heard their groaning, and YHVH remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*. On the term *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

27. ***Is* זאת (*zot*), *this, how you repay YHVH?...*** Interpreting זאת (*zot*), *this*, as a name of *Shekhinah*, Rabbi Yehudah construes this verse as follows: "Do *you repay YHVH* by causing *zot, this*—namely *Shekhinah*—to go into exile, thereby separating the divine couple?" Furthermore, "Do you repay *zot*, *this*, by causing Her to go into exile?"

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, note 25. The term "miracles" renders נמוסין (*nimosin*), "laws," derived from the Greek *nomos* ("custom, law"). In the *Zohar, nimosin* occasionally implies (and involves a play on) נסין (*nissin*), "miracles," supernatural enactments that contravene the "laws" of nature. See above, pp. 758–59, n. 5.

28. **הליהוה (*Ha-le-YHVH*), *Is* [*this how you repay*] *YHVH?...*** In a Torah scroll the initial letter ה (*he*) in the word הליהוה (*ha-le-YHVH*) is written large. Conversely, the first ה (*he*) in the word בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*, is written small.

According to Rabbi Yehudah, the letter *he* can symbolize two different *sefirot*, each of whom is pictured as Mother: *Binah* (Mother of the seven lower *sefirot*) and *Shekhinah* (Mother of the lower worlds). The large he symbolizes *Binah*, whereas the small *he* symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

In biblical Hebrew the word עולם (*olam*) means "eternity," and in the verse from Psalm 106 the simple sense of העולם מן ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*) is *from eternity to eternity*, or *forever and ever*. Here, Rabbi Yehudah adopts the later sense of *olam* as "world" and so construes the phrase as *from world to world*—that is, from the realm of *Binah* to that of *Shekhinah*.

The quotation from Numbers—*with a fourth of* ההין (*ha-hin*), *a hin, of beaten oil*—alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the fourth letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*) and is also pictured as the fourth leg of the Divine Throne. See above, p. 622, n. 368. The full verse describes the grain offering that accompanied the offering of a lamb each morning and evening: *And a tenth of an ephah of semolina as a grain offering, mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil*.

According to *Matoq mi-Devash*, the phrase "ה (*he*), *Shekhinta*" (near the beginning of the paragraph) means that the large ה (*he*) symbolizes *Binah*, who is sometimes called Upper *Shekhinah*.

On the large and small *he*s, see *Zohar* 1:93a; *Minḥat Shai* on Deuteronomy 32:6. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Blessed is YHVH, God of Israel*, מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), *from eternity to eternity. And all the people say, "Amen, Hallelujah"* [or: *"Amen." Hallelujah*]. On the construal *from world to world*, see above, p. 751, n. 55.

29. **wherever they are, He is among them...** See above at notes 24–26.

30. **I see by your face...** This apparently implies that Rabbi Yitsḥak is often in the presence of Rabbi Shim'on, in

whom *Shekhinah* dwells. See the following note; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders why Scripture employs the past tense when recording God's assurance that He will redeem Israel from Egyptian bondage: ואֵרֵד (*Va-ered*), *I have come down, to rescue them*. It would seem that the divine declaration should be worded in the future tense: אֵרֵד (*ered*), *I will come down*. He explains that *I have come down* refers to an earlier time, when God accompanied Jacob as the patriarch went down to Egypt. See Genesis 46:4: *I Myself will come down with you to Egypt and I Myself will surely bring you up as well*.

On Rabbi Ḥiyya's opening remark ("I see by your face…"), see above, p. 11, n. 27. On the link between the forms *va-ered* (*I have come down*) and *ered* (*I will come down*), see *Shemot Rabbah* 3:3. The full verse in Psalms reads: *He calls Me and I answer him, I am with him in distress. I will rescue him and honor him*.

31. **wherever Israel dwells…** On God's accompanying Israel wherever they dwell, see above, note 25.

Rabbi Yitsḥak concludes by saying that both he and Rabbi Ḥiyya are going "to welcome *Shekhinah*," which means that they are journeying to greet Rabbi Shim'on.

According to rabbinic tradition, "whoever welcomes [literally: receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*." See *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Yitro*) 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: "Rabbi Shemu'el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, '… Whoever welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'… Rabbi Yishma'el taught… 'One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* sometimes transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are called the face of *Shekhinah* "because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment and they are revealed"

(2:163b). On the theme of "the face of *Shekhinah*" and on the divine nature of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, p. 426, n. 425.

32. **Those who are sent to perform a *mitsvah*...** Rabbi Yitsḥak applies this Talmudic teaching to himself and Rabbi Ḥiyya, who are engaged in the holy act of going to visit the "divine" Rabbi Shim'on.

For the Talmudic statement "Those who are sent to perform a *mitsvah* ...," see BT *Pesaḥim* 8b, *Qiddushin* 39b, *Ḥullin* 142a (all in the name of Rabbi El'azar).

33. ***These are the generations...*** According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, *the heavens* includes not only the actual *heavens* but also the divine *heavens*, namely *Ze'eir Anpin* (whose core is *Tif'eret*). Similarly, *and the earth* includes not only the terrestrial world but also the divine *earth*, namely *Shekhinah*. All the lower worlds constitute the *generations of the heavens and the earth*—namely of the divine couple.

On the inclusive sense of *the heavens and the earth*, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:14 (and parallels, on Genesis 1:1), where, however, the midrashic interpretation is based not on the definite article but rather on the particle את (*et*). (On the hermeneutical significance of *et*, see above, p. 287, n. 114.) Genesis 2:4 reads: *These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created*.

34. **If so, what is meant by בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*...** According to a midrashic tradition in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, the word בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*, can be construed as בה׳ בראם (*be-he bera'am*), "By [the letter] *he* He created them." Here, this letter represents *Shekhinah*, who is often symbolized by the final letter of יהוה (*YHVH*).

Rabbi Yitsḥak's point is: If God created all the lower worlds by *Shekhinah* alone, how can Rabbi Ḥiyya say that those worlds *were created* by both divine partners?

For the midrashic reading בה׳ בראם (*be-he bera'am*), see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10; BT *Menaḥot* 29b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit*

16, *Lekh Lekha* 4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 109b; *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:363); *Midrash Tehillim* 62:1; 114:3; *Zohar* 1:46b, 91b; 3:34b, 43a; *ZḤ* 1d (*MhN*), 17a (*MhN*), 26a (*MhN*).

35. **All is one matter…** Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that when *Ze'eir Anpin* (*the heavens*) united with *Shekhinah* (*the earth*), She then gave birth to the lower worlds, which are thus described as their joint *generations*.

36. **If so, how do we establish…** Rabbi Yitsḥak mentions another midrashic anagram of בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*—באברהם (*be-Avraham*), *by Abraham*. In its rabbinic context, this implies that *the heavens and the earth* were fashioned for Abraham's sake. For Rabbi Yitsḥak, it indicates that the lower worlds were created *by Ḥesed*, symbolized by Abraham. But if so, how can Rabbi Ḥiyya say that those worlds *were created* by the combined action of *Ze'eir Anpin* and *Shekhinah*?

For the midrashic reading באברהם (*be-Avraham*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:9 (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Korḥah); *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 16; *Lekh Lekha* 4; *Zohar* 1:3b–4a, 86b, 91b, 93a, 105b, 128b, 154b, 230b, 247a; 2:31a, 48b, 79a, 220b; 3:31a, 38a.

37. **It is all one matter…** Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that since the six *sefirot* of *Ze'eir Anpin* (*the heavens*) begin with *Ḥesed*, it is correct to say that the lower worlds were created *be-Avraham, by Abraham* (who symbolizes *Ḥesed*). The role of *Shekhinah* is indicated by the other midrashic reading—*be-he bera'am*, "By [the letter] *he* He created them"—namely by *Shekhinah* (*the earth*). See above, notes 33–35.

38. **this world was created by ה (*he*)…** As indicated by the midrashic reading of בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*, as בה׳ בראם (*be-he bera'am*), "By [the letter] *he* He created them." See above, note 34.

Rabbi Yitsḥak is also referring to another midrashic tradition about the letters י (*yod*) and ה (*he*). See *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10: "כי ביה יהוה צור עולמים (*Ki be-Yah YHVH tsur olamim*),

For by Yah YHVH, an eternal rock (Isaiah 26:4)—with these two letters the blessed Holy One created His world [interpreting the verse as: *For* ביה (*be-Yah*), *by* (the letters) ה י (*yod, he*), *YHVH* צר עולמים (*tsar olamim*), *formed worlds*].... This world was created by ה (*he*)... and the world that is coming was created by י (*yod*)."

Here this latter midrashic tradition implies that the terrestrial world was created by *Shekhinah*—symbolized by the letter ה (*he*)—along with Her divine partner. "The world that is coming" symbolizes *Binah*, which was created by the letter י (*yod*), symbolizing the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*.

The verse from Genesis signifies that the *river* of *Binah* *issues from Eden* (symbolizing *Ḥokhmah*). *Binah*'s flow of emanation waters *the garden*, which includes the six *sefirot* of *Ze'eir Anpin* (*Ḥesed* to *Yesod*), symbolized by *the heavens*. The wording את הגן (*et ha-gan*), *the garden*, includes *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*). This is based on the hermeneutical significance of את (*et*) and on the fact that it alludes to *Shekhinah*. See above, p. 287, n. 114.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77c; BT *Menaḥot* 29b; *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:363); *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:1; *Tosafot* on *Berakhot* 51a, s.v. *zokheh*; *Zohar* 1:140a, 141b; 2:22b, 126b–127a; 3:290b (*IZ*). On *olam* as both "eternal, eternity" and "world," see above, note 28.

On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, p. 144, n. 279. Genesis 2:10 reads in full: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. See above, p. 201, n. 45; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 229–51.

39. ***A spring of gardens...*** Describing *Ze'eir Anpin* (who is symbolized by *the heavens*).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *A spring of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon*. See above, p. 428, n. 430.

40. ***A well of living waters…*** Alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is often pictured as *a well*.

The subject of both verses in Genesis is Isaac, who symbolizes *Gevurah*, sometimes pictured as the source of *Shekhinah*. In v. 25, *there* refers to Beer-sheba; in v. 22, *there* refers to the wadi of Gerar.

41. ***And streams from Lebanon…*** *Lebanon* symbolizes *Ḥokhmah*, where "they" (*Ze'eir Anpin* along with *Shekhinah*) are adorned. "The head of the King" is constituted by *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*.

The verse in Psalms reads: *For Your love is higher than* [or: *great over*] *the heavens*. Here, it apparently implies that *Ḥesed* (Love)—along with the following *sefirot* of *Ze'eir Anpin*—rises *higher than the heavens*, that is, *higher than Ze'eir Anpin* "to the head of the King." On this verse, see BT *Pesaḥim* 50b; *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:6a; 3:16a. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

42. **from there they issue to all…** From *Ḥokhmah*, *streams* of emanation proceed, finally gathering in *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as "the Great Sea."

According to Rabbi Yitsḥak, in the verse from Isaiah, *the rock* alludes to *Ze'eir Anpin*, and *the quarry* refers to *Shekhinah*—the divine parents of souls. See above, p. 602, n. 302.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams flow, there they flow* [or: *flow back*] *again*.

43. ***A locked garden…*** *Shekhinah*, whose flow of emanation remains *locked* and *sealed* within Her until the time arrives for *generations* to issue. Alternatively, *Shekhinah* must be protected from demonic forces, so She is described as *locked* and *sealed*.

On the two midrashic readings of בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*, see above, notes 34–37. The verse in Song of Songs (*A locked garden*…) actually appears

before the other verse (*A spring of gardens*...), not "afterward." On Song of Songs 4:12, see *Zohar* 1:32b, 63b; 2:4a (*MhN*); 3:66b.

44. **Even really by Jacob!...** One could say that the generative flow proceeds to *Shekhinah* from *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Jacob. It is all one process. Cf. above, notes 35, 37.

45. **When we sit before Rabbi Shim'on...** In his presence, secrets can be revealed openly, with no need for disguising the actual names of the *sefirot* by various images and epithets.

On the liberating effects of being in Rabbi Shim'on's presence, see *Zohar* 2:86b, 144a; 3:79a, 105b–106a. On the open or revealed quality of his generation, see Vol. 8, p. 191, n. 398.

46. **Rabbi Shim'on is not like other human beings...** On his unique status, see above, p. 27, n. 68; p. 426, n. 425; pp. 846–47, n. 234. On the comparison (and contrast) between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11–42.

47. ***Can a woman forget her suckling?...*** The context (Isaiah 49:14–15) reads: *Zion said, "YHVH has forsaken me, My Lord has forgotten me." Can a woman forget her suckling, or feel no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these* [or: *she*] *may forget, yet I will not forget you*.

48. **If in the cluster of Companions...** That is, "If among the Companions we have heard no reliable (new) interpretation of this verse, how can we venture to say anything?" This conservative attitude contrasts with the *Zohar*'s frequent emphasis on innovation. See above, p. 145, n. 282.

49. **I heard a hinting voice...** Rabbi Ḥiyya recalls that one day he heard, from a distance, the trace of someone's voice speaking about the verse in Isaiah; but he cannot identify who it was or what exactly was said. This experience frustrated him so greatly that he actually

became ill and couldn't eat anything for a week. Now he is going to see Rabbi Shim'on (the Holy Lamp), who will be able to reveal to him what he failed to fully perceive. On Rabbi Shim'on's title, the Holy Lamp, see above, p. 27, n. 68.

50. **Maybe it was the same day...** Rabbi Yitsḥak suggests that, in fact, Rabbi Ḥiyya had vaguely heard Rabbi El'azar expounding the verse from Isaiah, while Rabbi Yitsḥak was accompanying Rabbi El'azar. On the figure of Rabbi El'azar's father-in-law, see above, pp. 263–64, n. 55.

51. **his father...** Rabbi Shim'on—whom Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yitsḥak are on their way to visit.

For the context in Isaiah, see above, note 47. As indicated there, the verse actually reads:... *My Lord has forgotten me*.

52. ***Shekhinah*** **replied...** Fittingly, the feminine aspect of God utters the verse about maternal love. The image of *faithful seed* in the verse from Jeremiah is associated here with *the child of her womb*.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Can a woman forget her suckling, or feel no compassion for the child of her womb*? *Even* אלה תשכחנה (*elleh tishkaḥnah*), *these may forget, yet I will not forget you*. According to its simple sense, *elleh* (*these*) refers to the mother(s) mentioned in the first half of the verse. The use of the plural—*these*—suggests that the first half of the verse is describing two mother figures. Some translations simplify the matter by rendering *elleh* as *she*: *Even she may forget*.

However, in rabbinic literature, the phrase *elleh tishkaḥnah, these may forget*, is construed as *elleh tishakhaḥnah, these will be forgotten*—referring to the sin of the Golden Calf, based on the fact that the word *these* figures prominently in the account of that tragic event, when the worshipers declared: אלה (*Elleh*), *These, are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!* (Exodus 32:4). Thus, God promises to "forget" and expunge that sin.

Here Rabbi Shim'on selects a different instance of *elleh* (*these*): *Elleh, These, are the generations of the heavens and the earth*. Thus, *Shekhinah* declares: *Even these*—namely *the generations of the heavens and the earth*, i.e., all of Creation—*may be forgotten, yet I will not forget you*.

On the significance of *these* in the verses from Isaiah and Exodus 32, see BT *Berakhot* 32b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 17:7; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 31, 146a; *Zohar* 1:228a; 2:221a, 236b. Cf. *Targum Yonatan* on Isaiah 49:15.

53. **[Rabbi El'azar] said further…** Quoting his father, Rabbi Shim'on.

The words of the verse—*Can a woman forget her suckling*…?—allude to the union of the divine couple, which engenders holy souls. So "these words are attached to His name"—that is, to *YHVH*, whose letters signify the unification of "all" the *sefirot*.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, p. 74, n. 60. On Israel's being attached to God's name, see *Zohar* 3:60b–61a, 149a, 260b–261a. Cf. Vol. 7, pp. 490–91, n. 431.

54. **This is it, certainly!…** Rabbi Ḥiyya realizes that this is the full substance of what he had vaguely heard one day from the "hinting voice" on the way. See above, note 49.

The clause "from whom I heard it" refers to Rabbi El'azar. See above, note 50.

55. ***Then you will delight in YHVH…*** For the context, see above, p. 776, n. 27.

56. ***Remember the days of old…*** The full verse reads: *Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will say to you*.

57. **ימות עולם (*yemot olam*), *the days of old…*** In biblical Hebrew the word עולם (*olam*) means "eternity," and in this verse the simple sense of *yemot olam* is *the days of old*. Here, though, Rabbi Abba adopts the later sense of *olam* as "world." *The days of the world* are the six cosmic days—

namely the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*—each of which performed its work on one day of the primordial week of Creation.

The simple sense of the verse in Exodus is *Because in six days YHVH made heaven and earth*; but Rabbi Abba construes it to mean: *Because with six* sefirotic *days YHVH made heaven and earth*.

On *olam* as "eternity" and "world," see above, note 28. On the verse in Exodus, see Exodus 31:17; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 14:4; *Bahir* 39 (57), 55 (82), 105 (158); Naḥmanides on Exodus 20:11; *Zohar* 1:30a, 247a; 2:31a, 89b; 3:94b, 103b; *ZḤ* 26c; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 134; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 81b.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *For* [or: *Because*] *six days YHVH made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in it, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore YHVH blessed the seventh day and hallowed it*.

58. **those *days of the world* will know...** The sefirotic *days* will be aware of all time and all *generations*.

59. ***Ask your father...*** This implies: Ask your heavenly Father.

The verb הגיד (*higgid*), "to tell," can imply conveying wisdom. Here the deep message is that the entire purpose of Creation was for Israel to fulfill the Torah. See BT *Shabbat* 88a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Why is it written *It was evening and it was morning*, יום הששי (*yom ha-shishi*), *the sixth day* (Genesis 1:31). Why is there an additional letter ה (*he*) [signifying *the*, whereas the definite article does not appear with any of the preceding days of Creation]? This teaches that the blessed Holy One stipulated a condition with the works of Creation, saying to them: 'If Israel accepts the Torah [which was given specifically on *the sixth day* of Sivan], you will endure. If not, I will return you to *chaos and void* (ibid., 2).'"

On the significance of the verb *higgid*, "to tell," see above, p. 813, n. 140. On the passage in BT *Shabbat*, see BT

Avodah Zarah 3a, 5a; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 20:3; 75:1; 76:4; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 12, p. 236; above, p. 306, n. 33.

The context in Genesis (1:1–2) reads: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was chaos and void, with darkness over the face of the deep, and the spirit* [or: *breath, wind*] *of God hovering over the waters*.

60. **how those branches of the Tree are joined to it...** The branches of the cosmic Tree are the seventy heavenly princes ruling over the other nations of the world. Israel, however, is the personal share of the blessed Holy One.

On the heavenly princes of the nations, see above, p. 50, n. 140. The context in Deuteronomy (32:8–9) reads: *When the Most High allotted the nations, when He dispersed humankind, He set the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the Children of Israel. Indeed,* YHVH*'s share is His people, Jacob His allotted possession*. See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:8 (and parallels); Rashi on Deuteronomy 32:8.

61. ***He found him in a wilderness land...*** The people of Israel originated in a forsaken place—namely in a land of idolatry. God rescued Abraham from this bleak region and has guided his descendants ever since.

The context in Deuteronomy (32:10–11) reads: *He found him in a wilderness land, in the emptiness of a howling desert. He encircled him, gave mind to him, guarded him like the pupil of His eye. Like an eagle rousing his nest, hovering over his fledglings, He spread His wings, He took him, bearing him on His pinion*.

On the association of the first verse with Abraham and Terah, see the fragment from *Yelammedenu* in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 6:80; above, p. 355. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 313; *Midrash Tanna'im, Deuteronomy* 32:10.

On the second verse as demonstrating the eagle's compassion, see *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 19:4; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 314; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:11; *Tanḥuma, Eqev* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Eqev* 3; Rashi, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:80b; 3:233a. On the eagle's compassion, see also above, p. 574, n. 223.

The context in Joshua reads: *Joshua said to all the people, "Thus said YHVH, God of Israel: 'Your forefathers dwelled beyond the Euphrates long ago—Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan, and I multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac.'"*

62. **We have found no creature so compassionate…** See the preceding note.

The verse from Ezekiel describes his vision of the four *ḥayyot* (living beings) carrying the heavenly throne. Each being had four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of a bull on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. The full verse reads: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had a bull's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face*. According to Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 45), the peculiar formulation of the verse reflects the sequence of observation. The onlooker (on any side) was confronted by a human face, flanked by two animal faces on its right and left. Finally, from what could be seen on the heads of the rest of the creatures, the onlooker inferred that in back of the human face confronting him was an eagle's face.

Here Rabbi Yose asks about the eagle's location. He answers that it occupied the place of *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by Jacob and known as *the heavens. Tif'eret* is also called *Raḥamim* (Compassion), balancing *Ḥesed* (Love) on the right and *Din* (Judgment) on the left. Just as the eagle is compassionate toward its young and harsh toward any

potential predators, so God is compassionate toward Israel and harsh toward any of its potential enemies.

See *Zohar* 2:80b. On the eagle's combining compassion and judgment, see also *Zohar* 2:42a (*RM*). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Three things are too wondrous for me, and four I cannot know: the way of the eagle in the heavens, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship in the heart of the sea, and the way of a man in* [or: *with*] *a young woman*.

63. ***YHVH alone did lead him…*** Whereas other nations are led by heavenly princes, God Himself leads Israel. See above, note 60.

The full verse in Exodus 13 reads: *YHVH was going before them by day in a column of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a column of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and by night*.

After the incident of the Golden Calf, which enflamed God's wrath, Moses insists that God Himself *go*—that is, *go with us*. The context in Exodus 33 (verses 15–16) reads: *If Your presence does not go* [i.e., *go with us*], *do not take us up from here! How, then, will it be known that I have found favor in Your eyes, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, that I and Your people may be distinguished from every people that is on the face of the earth?*

64. ***YHVH will not abandon His people…*** Because they cling to His Name. See above, note 53.

On the concluding sentence, see above at notes 24–25. The full verse in Samuel reads: *For YHVH will not abandon His people, for the sake of His great name, because YHVH has resolved to make you His people*. See *Zohar* 3:73b.

65. ***Were they wise…*** The full verse reads: *Were they wise, they would contemplate* [or: *consider, comprehend*] *this, understand their final end*.

66. **All these verses here…** In Moses' song (Deuteronomy 32:1–43). The "Holy Name that he revealed" refers to the passage beginning *For the name of YHVH do I call…* (ibid., 3–4). See above at notes 7–10.

67. **there is no word in Torah…** The entire Torah constitutes the Name of God. See above, p. 26, n. 66.

68. **the name of the blessed Holy One is inscribed…** This may refer specifically to the verse *For the name of YHVH do I call…* (Deuteronomy 32:3, referred to above at note 66), or to the various sefirotic allusions in the verses of Moses' song (as explained in the preceding pages).

Rabbi Abba interprets *they would contemplate* זאת (*zot*), *this*, as referring to *Shekhinah*, who is called *zot*. See above, note 25; *Zohar* 3:60b. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 323. For the full verse, see above, note 65.

The full verse in Job reads: *Heaven will expose his sin, and earth will rise up against him*. Here, *earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who *will rise up against* a sinner. See above, p. 747, n. 45.

69. **She is linked to Israel…** When the people of Israel fulfill the commandments, *Shekhinah* (known as *zot*) is united with them and helps them defeat their foes.

Deuteronomy 32:30 reads in full: *How could one pursue a thousand, or two put a myriad to flight, unless their Rock had sold them and YHVH had handed them over?* According to its simple sense, *How could one pursue a thousand?* means *How could one* enemy soldier *pursue a thousand* of Israel? Here, however, Rabbi Abba construes it in the opposite sense: *How could one* Israelite *pursue a thousand* of the enemy? For a similar midrashic reading, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:30; BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b; cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 323.

70. ***Unless their Rock had sold them…*** Their Divine *Rock sold them* to their enemies because they had *weakened* it. By acting immorally, they caused a defect in the sefirotic "adornments" and damaged the divine configuration. See above, notes 15–16.

The word תשי (*teshi*) derives from the root נשה (*nshh*), "to forget," and the simple meaning of the verse in

Deuteronomy is: *The Rock that bore you, you forgot*. However, according to a midrashic reading, the word means *you weakened*, based on the root תשש (*tshsh*), "to be weak." See above, pp. 92–93, n. 115.

71. **This is Abraham...** According to a rabbinic tradition, God asked Abraham which punishment he preferred for his descendants, if and when they sinned: Hell or subjugation to the nations. Abraham chose the latter, thereby consigning Israel to subjugation, or "selling them off," as implied by a midrashic reading of the verse in Deuteronomy: *unless their Rock had sold them* (since Isaiah 51:1–2 identifies Abraham as *the rock from which you were hewn*).

See above, pp. 149–50, n. 292. The context in Isaiah reads: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you*.

72. **in this song...** Namely, the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43). Moses reproved Israel so that they would not sin and thereby cause *Shekhinah* to go into exile along with them.

73. **In two places the blessed Holy One intends...** When the nations of the world hear that God is indicting Israel and intending to punish them, they rejoice at the prospect of Israel's destruction. But when those nations hear the specific charge—*In the womb he seized his brother by the heel*—they are deeply disappointed. In the parable, the mother represents God, while the judge represents the divine attribute of Judgment.

Similarly, the beginning of the verse in Isaiah indicates that God will *contend* with Israel, accusing them in court. But its continuation promises that the taint of Israel's sins will disappear.

The passage in Hosea (12:3–4) reads: *YHVH has an indictment against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways, and according to his deeds requite him. In the*

womb עקב את אחיו (*aqav et aḥiv*), *he seized his brother by the heel* [or: *he betrayed his brother*], *and in his strength he strove with God*.

According to Genesis 25:26, when Esau and Jacob were born, Jacob's hand was *grasping Esau's* עקב (*aqev*), *heel*, and Jacob's name יעקב (*Ya'aqov*) is etymologized as "heel-grabber." In Genesis 27:36, Esau adds another layer of etymology by linking *Ya'aqov* with the verb ויעקבני (*va-ya'qeveni*), *he deceived me*—referring to how Jacob cunningly obtained Esau's birthright, and later deceived Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. On Jacob's striving with God, see Genesis 32:25–33.

Rabbi Yitsḥak is drawing here on midrashic sources (in the names of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman and Rabbi Yudan son of Rabbi Shim'on). See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 6:2 (on 5:16); *Tanḥuma, Emor* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 13; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:1.

On the passage in Hosea, see *Zohar* 2:110b–111b. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Come let us contend* [or: *engage in discussion*; *reason together*]*—says YHVH. If your sins are like scarlet, they will turn white as snow; if they are red as crimson, they will become like fleece*.

The material from the middle of 299a to the bottom of 299b appears above, pp. 358–63. See above, p. 307, n. 36.